AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

VOLS. I & II

BY

A. S. PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR, M.A. (OXON.), I.C.S.

R. C. S. MANIAM
SESHADRIPURAM, BANGALORE
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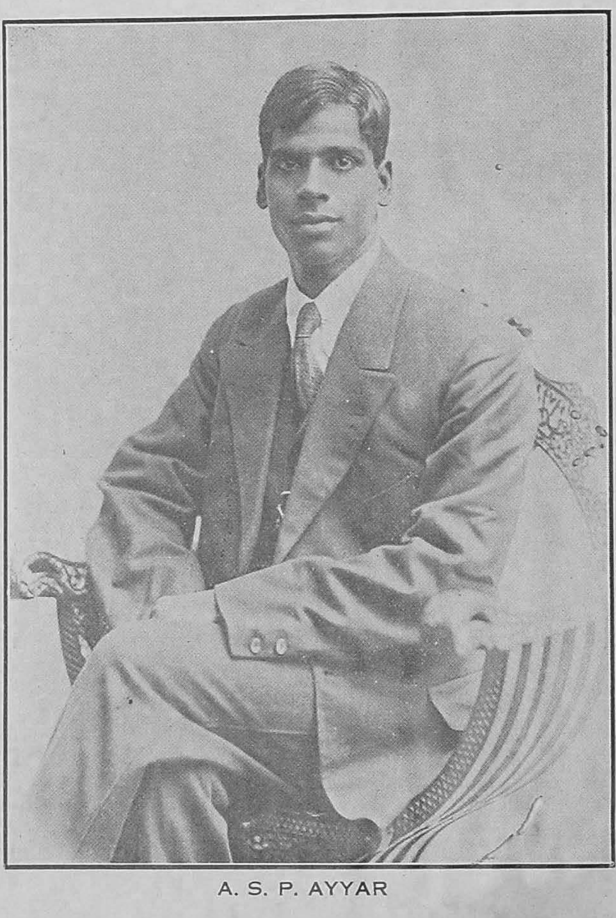

A. S. P. AYYAR

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VOLUME. I.

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PREFACE

PERHAPS there was never a time when man did not travel; certainly, there never was a time when he did not recount the experiences of his travels. The God-given conveyance, the homely foot, was at first the only means of transport though soon with the advance of civilization there came in succession the palanquin carried on human shoulders, the horse and the donkey, the dug-out and the boat, the cart drawn by bullocks, buffalœs, horses, donkeys and mules, and the luxurious chariot drawn by two or four horses. Long after wards came the railway, the steamship, the motor car, the tram and the air ship Travel no doubt has increased tremendously in volume with the improvement in the means of communication, but it was even in the earliest times far from uncommon. The traveller's account of the travels was listened to with rapt attention by his villagers; not unoften he was sent for by the neighbouring lord or king and made to relate in detail his experiences. Humanity has always evinced a keen interest in hearing about strange countries. In good old days when recreations were few the travellers supplied a

much-needed source of entertainment. Sometimes they related their experiences with another object also, namely to enable other travellers to travel with less trouble. Merchants, pilgrims and soldiers were among the earliest travellers. Of these the merchants and soldiers were interested in hiding their routes. Trade routes were in ancient days as jealously guarded as military routes. But the pilgrims had no motive to conceal their routes, and some of the most charming accounts of travel are by pilgrims. Indians will at once remember Fa Hien, Yuan Chwang, Itsing and others. The pilgrims, however, were prepossessed with things spiritual and rarely condescended to chronicle purely mundane things in which the ordinary mortal perhaps takes greater interest. Later centuries saw the rise of professional explorers and globe-trotters, who set forth their experiences in great detail. Latterly, another object has been kept in view in writing such books, namely the promotion of good relations between countries by better knowledge of one another.

MANY Englishmen have written down their experiences in India. Few Indians have given an account of their stay in England. This book has been written at the earnest request of several friends who wanted to know the actual experiences of an orthodox Hindu in the distant lands of the West. I have set down the facts as they occurred, to the

best of my remembrance. *Where, as in the last three chapters, I have entered the realm of inferences and discussions I have tried my best to arrive at impartial conclusions based on the facts I observed.

THE world is getting smaller and smaller every day owing to the amazing improvement in communications. The air-ship has made London only a four days' journey from Karachi. As the West gets nearer the East, the necessity to know it closer becomes imperative. An unintelligent respect for everything western is as bad as a stupid contempt for all things occidental. Purely good and purely bad countries are as rare as purely good men and purely bad men. In the world we have a mixture of the good and the bad, and have to adjudge a nation good if the good predominates. A proper knowledge of the West will save us from unduly praising or blaming it. I trust that this book will in some way contribute to giving Indians a knowledge of the West.

(Sd) **A. S. P. Ayyar.** M.A. I.C.S.

Berhampore
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* *incorporated in the 2nd Volume*

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AN INDIAN IN WESTERN EUROPE

CHAPTER I.

THE UNEXPECTED LETTER AND ITS SEQUEL.

ON the 6th of September 1919, the postman came to our lodge at Mambalam and handed me a letter from my eldest brother at Aiylam, my native village in Malabar. When I opened it, I found another letter enclosed within it. My brother in his covering letter wrote that the enclosure was from the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, who had therein offered me a studentship to proceed to England. My heart thumped within me as I opened the letter from the Secretary and read with my own eyes the welcome offer. Soon, my lodge-mates crowded round me, and, in a moment, both the letters had become public property, being rapidly circulated among them. All my lodge-mates c ongratulated me sincerely on the unexpected good

fortune. For, none of us had expected the letter then.

From my early student days it had been my ambition to go to England. The rosy pictures in the Nelson readers and the enchanting stories and illustrations in the Highroads of British History, combined with the fact that all the Head Assistant Collectors of Palghat came from that country, made me dream of going to that wonderful land where all people were white and everything beautiful. These nebulous aspirations began to gather force when I passed high in all my examinations and joined the Arts college. After I took my B.A. degree with a double first class in 1918, I determined to make all possible efforts to go to England to pursue my higher studies. This determination was strengthened by the fact of two of my friends having gone there with their own money. My financial circumstances were such that I could not proceed to England at my own cost. I had to depend on some studentship or similar free or loan scholarship. I applied for the Government of India scholarship along with countless others; but that was very properly given to a research scholar instead of to I.C.S. aspirants like me and several of the other applicants. My only remaining hope was the Tata Education Scheme which, I learnt from one of my professors, was in the habit of giving two loan scholarships to distinguished Indian graduates to

proceed to England in order to study for the I.C.S. or other courses. In the middle of 1918 I had sent an application to the Secretary of this Scheme but had been given an endorsement that no students were being sent to England owing to the war and the consequent insecurity. All hopes of getting a scholarship or studentship disappeared with this, and I joined the Law College. I passed my F.L. examination and joined the B.L. class. I had then no higher ambition than to take a first class in the B.L., as I had done in the F.L., and practise in some country place in Malabar where the lawyer population was below ten per square mile.

So hopeless was I of going to England that in May 1919 I followed the time-honoured custom of the Brahmins of South India and married at the early age of 20. Evidently, my parents-in-law also shared my view as regards the utter impossibility of my going to England; else, they would never have given their daughter in marriage to me. For, Malabar was still very orthodox, much more so than now. I was the first Brahmin from my village, and indeed my part of the Taluk, to leave the ancestral shores for a foreign land in the far off west. All orthodox Brahmins dreaded the black waters. * Any man who crossed them was for them a man to

* Kalapani (Black Waters), the late Hindu Sastraic name for the ocean.

be avoided. Certainly, very few would in 1919 have given their daughters in marriage to those who intended to cross the black waters. But in 1919 the black waters did not mean quite the same as in 1899. In the latter year a man who went to Burma or the Straits Settlements would have been regarded as an outcaste for his having crossed the black waters. But Malabar was not economically capable of giving all its children a good living. The factories and rubber plantations in Burma, Penang, Singapore, Kedak and the Sunda islands wanted clerks and were willing to pay salaries tempting to the half-starved but adventurous Malabar youths. Many Brahmins and others left for those countries and returned after some years with heavy purses. The caste scruples were allayed by the perfectly true historical answer that they had gone only where their glorious ancestors had gone and colonized centuries ago, that Burma was but the ancient Suvarnabhumi with the sacred river Irrawady, that Sumatra and Java were pure Sanskrit words meaning "good motherland" and "barley," and that Singapore was but Simhapura. By these ingenious explanations and by a judicious observance of orthodox rites, combined with liberal gifts to priests, Malabar orthodoxy was made to exclude the Bay of Bengal and part of the Indian Ocean from the category of black waters by the year 1910. Then, during the great war, several Malabar youths went

to Mesopotamia and returned. These met with some social ostracism for having crossed the black waters till somebody discovered suddenly that, after all, Mesopotamia was but Babylon, and what was Babylon except Baveru mentioned in the Jataka stories * and the Puranas † as the city to which many orthodox Hindus had gone in the days when Hinduism was still in its pristine purity, uncontaminated by any alien ideas? This discovery excluded the Arabian Sea also from the list of unregenerate "Black Waters." Some indiscreet young men wanted to get South Africa and Kenya also included among the permitted lands. So they explained that the ancient Hindus went and colonised these places too, that it was only the Indian Ocean which separated them from Malabar, and that the Indian Ocean could never be a black water as anybody could see on the Malabar sea-coast. Orthodoxy was tired of making concessions. It wanted to stem the tide of revolution. It emphatically affirmed that the ancient Hindus had never gone to Africa or Kenya, as their very names would show and that the Indian ocean except the parts already excluded was most indubitably a black water. The sea-coast argument was torn to shreds by a clever orthodox geographer who declared that the waters became

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* Stories of the previous births of Buddha.

† Hindu mythological and historical sacred books.

black only 200 miles from the Indian coast, this latter concession being intended to cover journeys to the Laccadives and the Maladives and along the Indian coast. The advocates of Kenya and South Africa had to bow their heads in meek obedience. Henceforward, all journeys to Kenya and South Africa by high caste Hindus of Malabar were officially described as journeys to Basra, and the orthodox people for their part never scrutinised these statements too closely. Still, a journey to England stood on a different plane. It could not be hidden as the obscure journeys of coolies and clerks to Kenya and South Africa. Nor could the wildest enthusiast suggest that the ancient Hindus had colonised or even visited England. The orthodox people paid no heed to certain alleged journeys of ancient Hindus to Roma or Athens. All those voyagers were either Buddhists or atheists and as such their voyages only showed that such voyages should never be undertaken. The absence of Sanskrit names or Hindu temples in Europe was a proof positive to the orthodox Brahmins of Malabar that if any Hindus did really visit these places they were only atheists and heretics. The Brahmins who had gone to England from Malabar before 1919 had almost all of them to face awkward social persecution when they returned.

It was thus when I least expected it that the offer of the Tatas came. I had not the slightest

hesitation as to what I should do. Here was the long-dreamt-for opportunity to go to England and pursue my higher studies. I resolved to accept it at once despite the certain oppposition of my numerous orthodox relations I went to the nearest telegraph office and wired to the Secretary of the Tata Education Scheme accepting his offer and intimating that I would be taking that night's train for Bombay.

At that moment there were very few Indians who, having studied up to the B. L., Class, were more Indian in their habits and less anglicized than myself. Born in an orthodox Brahmin family in an exclusively orthodox Brahmin village, I had been taught to regard egg-eating as a sin, smoking as a vice, wearing a tie and collar as dandyism, and hair-cutting and daily shave as un-Brahminical. A foot-wear of any kind I had never worn. Bread I had always eschewed religiously, owing to the orthodox suspicion that toddy was used in its preparation. I was a staunch adherent of the joint family and the laws of Manu. Early marriage and enforced widowhood counted me among their supporters though I did not abhor postpuberty marriages or widow remarriages arising out of the widows' own will and not due to the misguided activities of parents or widow remarriage associations. The only respects wherein I differed from the orthodox Brahmins of my village were in

my unbelief in untouchability and my belief in enforced widowerhood, unless the widowers consented to marry only widows, and interdining with all persons. From my father I had learnt to regard untouchability as a hideous sin and had even incurred the severe displeasure of my villagers by bringing untouchables into the village against the social laws then prevailing. Interdining with all persons of whatever caste or creed was rather believed by me in theory than put into practice often. Only twice before going to England had I actually interdined with persons of other castes, and, even then, the articles partaken in common were but sweetmeats and coffee, not very serious according to orthodox people.

So, when I finally decided to go to England, I was chaffed by some of my lodge-mates, staunch believers in the daily shave and full crop and loaf-eating, for my impending volte-face. Again, we were somewhat perplexed at the persistent opinions then current in Madras that anybody who went to England must be prepared to eat meat, drink liquor, and smoke, opinions which were and are thoroughly wrong and which perhaps deter many vegetarians, teetotallers and non-smokers from going to England. Though on the day on which I took my fateful decision I had no definite authority to quote for my belief that anybody could live in England without meat or liquor or smoke, yet my

belief in this was unshakeable, and, curiously enough, all my lodge-mates shared in it too.

After I had sent the telegram, I had only a bare six hours for getting ready for going to Bombay. I bought some very necessary articles and looked forward to the journey. For people who have gone to Bombay often, the journey from Madras to that place is tedious; and very rightly too. They regard the journey very much as Indian philosophers regard life, as a thing whose end is not at all to be deplored. But for a person going to Bombay like me for the first time, the journey appeared to be of absorbing interest with endless possibilities of discovery and exploration.

Nor was I very much disappointed. When I crossed the Tungabhadra and Krishna, I felt an exaltation. The sacred rivers fully answered my expectations, and the giant boulders heaped up on either side of the railroad in the Raichur doab impressed me much and added to the interest which this battle-ground of the Bahmani and Vijayanagar Kingdoms had for me. At Wadi I had an idea of the vastness and comparative barrenness of the Nizam's Dominions. I saw a mirage for the first time there. All the passengers watched this strange phenomenon with wonder and incredulity, for the thing was so real-looking. At Kurdwadi the Mahrattas began to come into the train, and I had a glimpse of this warlike race for which I have always

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had a great admiration. It was specially gratifying to see how Mahratta ladies were able to board trains without any help from their men-folk unlike their southern sisters. Poona roused in me a hundred historical associations, but the prosaic train stopped at Poona only as long as at the other junctions. It was a real disappointment to me not to be able to see Poona City. I was also somewhat disappointed at not having seen any of those numerous Mahratta hill forts which I would have seen had I taken the other route to Bombay. But all this disappointment disappeared when I saw the exquisite scenery between Lonavla and Kalyan. The Sahyadris, so closely associated with Sivaji, made an abiding impression on me. When I reached Bombay, I was not at all tired. I had enough energy left in me to go to the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, that very day and settle the preliminaries.

Bombay struck me as pre-eminently a commercial and cosmopolitan city unlike Madras which has an oriental air of leisure about it. The congestion there was in marked contrast to the conditions in Madras. Madras derives its main importance from the fact of its being the capital of a presidency containing 42 million inhabitants. The Harbour is much less known than the High Court. In Bombay, the Harbour overshadows everything, and the High Court buildings are nothing comparable

to those in Madras. Bombay has got representatives of almost all the races of mankind. Prominent among them are however the ubiquitous Parsis with their peculiar caps, the ever-successful Gujaratis and the manly Mahrattas. By the number of Parsis one sees in Bombay one is apt to put their number in that city at a far higher figure than the census statistics would warrant. Quite the same thing is the case with the Brahmins in Madras or any other southern city.

Sight-seeing at Bombay had unique charms for me. In Madras one never fully realizes the size and population of the city owing to its dispersed character, but Bombay is one vast assemblage of houses and human beings. Besides, the races in Bombay were quite distinct from the races in Madras. But what struck me most in Bombay was the hideous contrast between the palatial residences of the merchant princes and the horrible slums of their employees. These slums are called "Chawls," and there are a good many of them. From the outside these chawls present an appearance of grandeur; but just one peep into them will disillusion anybody. Every chawl is inhabited by scores of families each of which has generally only a single room. Here in this room, the householder and his family have to huddle themselves without any internal or external privacy. Cooking, eating, sleeping, entertaining,—all have to be done in this

single room. The partitions between the rooms are flimsy. Low whispers can be heard by one's neighbours. One lives always in public. The water difficulty is also great. The insanitary conditions of the lower grade of Bombay chawl can only be realized by a personal visit. It is my deliberate conviction that there is no slum in the East End of London, and I have seen some of it at close quarters, which will surpass in dirt and squalor some of the chawls of Bombay. In the country parts of India I was not accustomed to such vast differences. Even the poorest man had his own hut and legitimate share of God's air and light. Industrialism at its worst is seen in the lower grade of chawls at Bombay inhabited by the mill hands. Drink is the great enemy of these poor people, and there is no lack of toddy shops near these chawls. Doping children with opium is quite common among the women employed in the mills. They are not to blame, poor things; they have to earn their living, and many mills will not allow children inside. It is an alternative between starving and doping the children, and the latter prevails. It has always surprised me that while all civilized countries punish a man for an attempt at instant physical suicide many of them allow him to commit a mental and moral, and in the long run a physical, suicide by taking to drink and drugs.

At Bombay I received strong letters from my

father-in-law protesting against my unorthodox idea of going to England. Even my girl wife was made to send, contrary to orthodox usage, a letter to me imploring me not to go across the black waters. Half my time in Bombay was spent in penning long closely-reasoned letters justifying my action. For, though I had made up my mind to go to England despite all opposition, still I was desirous of convincing my relations of the correctness of my procedure, and, if possible, of winning their approval or at least their consent.

The interviews with the Secretary, Tata Education Scheme, were short and to the point. The Secretary wanted me to submit myself to a medical examination by a doctor named by him. This doctor, who was an Indian, demanded what he called his usual fee of Rs. 30 before examining me. To my protest at the enormity of the sum demanded, his reply was "You are going to become an I.C.S., you ought to pay." This was the first time that I paid Rs. 30 for a single visit to a doctor, but, unfortunately, not the last time. The medical examination was very thorough, and the doctor said that he would send the report direct to the Secretary. He did not even so much as tell me the result of the examination. To my question his reply was "You ought to know about your own health." I asked him whether a man could not continue to be a strict vegetarian in England. His

answer was an emphatic "no" to my consternation because he was a doctor and had been in England himself. Still my faith remained unshaken that where there was a will there would be a way.

I had to insure my life with the Sun Life Assurance Co. The Company's medical examination was more or less a repetition of the one I had already undergone. There was, however, one funny incident in connection with this. I had declared that my date of birth was the 26th of January 1899 and that my mother died about 50 days after my birth. What was my horror when I found some days later that the date of my mother's death had been put as 1898! The Company's doctor had calculated backwards instead of forwards! And, though the rules said that no alterations would be made under any circumstances the doctor quietly made the necessary alteration as he said that it was a question of physical impossibility being set right.

After these preliminaries were over, I went to Malabar to get my passport, identity certificate and naturalization certificate. The passport caused no trouble at all, but not so the naturalization certificate. This required the correct date of birth. Armed with an extract from the birth register, I went and saw the Collecter of Malabar in his office at Calicut. He asked me what proof of age I had got I showed him the extract from the birth register and also the identity certificate given

to me by the principal of the Law College wherein my date of birth was given as the 26th of January 1899. He pointed out that the name was not given in the birth-extract to which I replied that Hindus were not named as soon as they were born. "Well, but how am I to know that you are the child born on 26-1-1899? For aught I know, it may be your elder or younger brother," said he. I was indignant and said "Do you think that I would utter a lie?" "I think nothing" was the calm reply "but I want evidence." There is the certificate" I said. "That won't do" said he "Then, what is this impossible evidence you want?" I asked, and I had a vague suspicion that he wanted to prevent me from going to England. "Don't get excited" said he, "when you become a magistrate like me, you will see my difficulty. Now, have you got any relative in Calicut?" I named a lawyer. He said "Bring him along with you to-morrow to my bungalow at 10 A.M., and let him give an affidavit before me that you are the child meant." I agreed and did so the next day. The whole difficulty was solved. Now I realize how reasonable the Collector's objections were and how unjustifiable my indignation was.

Having obtained these documents I went to my native village to take leave of all the villagers. For, my village in those days formed a social whole and it was necessary to take leave of all. I was

the first person to cross the unregenerated black waters with the permission of the villagers. Naturally, many of them still felt a misgiving as regards their own approval. "It may be" said one "that you will never be contaminated with those wicked western ways, but, then, I have not yet known one Indian who returned from England who did not eat meat or drink or smoke." "How many Indians who have not gone to England eat meat, drink toddy and smoke?" I asked. "Well, they are all abandoned creatures" replied he "you will never do these things if you remain only in India, but whether you will be forced to do these in England I cannot say. Perhaps, the climate there requires it." "I will rather die than do these things" I said. "Yes, it is easier said than done. After all, life is a much greater thing than meat or wine or tobacco," was his reply. A malicious old relative who had heard about the submarines, asked me "What if a submarine were to sink your ship?" "I shall go under the sea, that is all" I replied, "but you will be saved the observance of pollution since the news will reach you long after the occurrence; you will escape with a bath." "But fancy your dying before me!" she said. "What is strange in it?" I replied "You came to this world long before I did, I shall be going to the other world long before you do, that is all." My grand-father's brother's advice was characteristic.

"We have been orthodox so long" said he "This is the first time a member of our family is crossing the black waters. I give my consent only because I think you will become a Collector some day, a thing which never happened before in the annals of our family. Keep our customs intact. Avoid meat, drink, and smoke, and concentrate your attention on your studies. Before you return across the black waters I might perhaps have crossed other waters" and he gave me his blessing. Poor man, his prophecy came true. He died long before I returned from England. In some ways, the most embarassing, and certainly the saddest, parting was that with my girl wife. She was only twelve years old, had nothing but the most rudimentary education, and did not know where England was or why I was going there. Her parents were followers of a fanatical orthodoxy and never liked the idea of my going to England. They sincerely regretted their having given their daughter to me; but the laws of Manu were on my side, and so they could do nothing. I cared little for their opinions, but the case was naturally different as regards my wife. I was eager to convince her that my course was right, She and I were partners for life, had become a spiritual unit the moment we joined our hands before the god of Fire, and I felt a greater responsibility towards her than towards all the others. Had she wept bitterly and implored me not to go,

I do not know what I would have done. Most probably, I would have still gone, since I was too far committed to draw back; but, then, I would have gone with an oppressive sadness. Few Non-Hindus can realize the really ardent affection which springs up between a girl wife and her husband after the marriage which is a purely spiritual affair. In a really typical case, such affection is quite strong in spite of or because of the tender age of the parties. Each thinks of the other as his or her own, idealizes the other and gets to merge his or her interests with the other's. But, as I shall be dealing with this more fully in a separate chapter, I shall not dilate further here. Fortunately for me, my wife met the crisis with unexpected courage. No doubt, she was dejected at my going, especially since many had spoken in her presence of the physical and moral dangers of going to a foreign land five thousand miles away across the black waters. But she did not weep or ask me not to go. She merely told me that many people had talked about the physical and moral dangers of going to England and implored me to steer clear of all of them. "I shall do also what lies within my power" she added smiling "I shall pray every morning and evening for your welfare." I smiled partly in satisfaction at this proof of her great love for me and partly at the futility of her childish belief in prayers. For, then, I was a typical product of the Madras

University, sceptical in matters religious, and with little belief in begging, spiritual or economic. A spiritual gulf separated me from my uneducated wife. She was of the old school with all the characteristic old ideas, and I was midway between the old and the new schools. When I finally took leave of her, she said with tears in her eyes "Remember me three times a day." I asked her "How often will you remember me?" "Always" said she, looking straight into my eyes with that dreamy depth which is so characteristic of Indian women. "Why, then, do you ask me to remember you only three times per day?" I asked. "Because" she said "You have your studies also to attend to. I have no such preoccupation. Hence the difference." So I parted from my girl wife and went from her home. The voyage to England had already begun in imagination. Try to suppress it as I would, the feeling that I was to separate from my people for three years and more asserted itself and took a prominent portion of my mental horizon. Afterwards my wife too has told me how at that critical moment of parting she felt an over-powering sense of desolation which she had to suppress lest she should grieve me.

That very day I took the train for Bombay and reached that place in three days. There I began, on the advice of some wise persons, to eat loaves and unsalted potatoes in order to be able to consume

these, which were supposed to be the only vegetarian things in England, for the next three years. This fare was most monotonous and gave me an acute vomitting sensation every time I took it; but, as vomitting would prove to the onlookers, who were many, that vegetarianism was impossible in England, I made heroic efforts and kept the sensation down. Still, the quantity I took diminished from day to day, and my sister-in-law remarked "In ten more days you will require no food except coffee. How can a man live on coffee alone and in such a cold country as England? Take our ordinary food while you are here. You will have plenty of time to starve when you go to England." I declined to be persuaded. I felt that the mantle of the apostle of vegetarianism had fallen upon my shoulders and that I must disprove the theories of the Bombay doctor and the Madras Advisory committee whose secretary's remark to my query whether vegetarianism was possible in England was "Impossible, my boy." Little did I know when I was eating the most uninspiring fare of loaves and unsalted mashed potatoes that in England also many excellent and tasty vegetarian dishes could be had. As my eyes fell upon the loaves and unsalted potatoes, my heart sank within me and I began to doubt whether, after all, the proverb "where there is a will there is a way" might not have its limitations. But these doubts disappeared after meals

and recurred again only at the next meal. In those wretched days I hated meal-time and made myself unnecessarily miserable by even refusing to eat Indian sweet-meats since these could not be had in England and so I should not take them in this my probationary period. When I think of that period now, I feel astonished at the immense trouble and inconvenience I endured then. I was a regular martyr in the cause of vegetarianism, but it was a wholly unnecessary martyrdom.

I had booked my berth in S. S. "NELLORE" which was to sail from Bombay on the 25th of October 1919. Most foolishly, I got some suits made in Bombay through a man who supplied me, perhaps in perfect good faith, with a number of misfits which included ladies' summer dressing gowns, a boy's hat, a dress suit which looked like a funeral suit, trousers which were a close approximation to breeches, an overcoat reaching up to my navel, ties which were nothing but tapes, and shoes which appeared to be made of buffalo hide. Since the man told me that he had gone to England several times and knew the fashions there well and had equipped many others going to England, I did not scrutinise the goods. Nor, if I had, would I have recognized the incongruities; for neither I nor any one of my friends knew how to test these western articles of dress. We admired even these ludicrous specimens of clothing though we were appalled at

the prices quoted against each of these innocent and queer-looking articles. "England is a costly land to live in, and so these clothes also cost a good deal" said a friend, and we were satisfied.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAILING OF THE NELLORE.

Fifty days after the receipt of the letter at Mambalam I was in the morning local train to Victoria Terminus with a few friends and relations who wanted to see me off. Absolute silence prevailed during this short journey in sharp contrast to the vivacious and animated talks we used to have on the previous days. Every one of us seemed to be conscious of the plunge into the unknown that I was taking. Our thoughts were too deep for expression. I had put on that funereal dress suit which made me look like a goat being led to a sacrifice.

Six main things were weighing on my mind and because of their very vagueness exercising a powerful depressing influence on it.

The first was the feeling that I was leaving my home, friends, relations and countrymen certainly for a long time and perhaps for ever. I was then, as now, a firm believer in the transitoriness of life which I regard as a bubble which may burst at any time releasing the immortal soul for pursuing its

further adventures with bubbles of different kinds till it ultimately merges itself in the Air which is God. My attachment to the village of my birth was not very strong since for the last ten years I had remained in different far-off places for my studies. Friends, in the real sense of the term, I had but few, the vast majority of the others being mere acquaintances. Relations, no doubt, I had in hordes, but I cannot honestly say that I loved them all or even a decent percentage of them. In fact, the utmost I had wished from them was to let me alone and not to pursue me unnecessarily with their envious bad wishes and calculated misrepresentations My countrymen had not as yet begun to have a concrete shape as an entity before me. They were not defined either inclusively or exclusively. The Kashmiris, Punjabees, Rajputs, U. P. men, Bengalees, C. P. men, and Oriyas had not yet been seen by me in sufficiently large numbers. So, my conception of Indians then had a predominant Madrasi touch about it, No doubt, the Kashmiris, Punjabees, Rajputs, U. P. men, Bengalees, C. P. men and Oriyas did, for decency's sake, occupy a fringe in that picture; but it was an insignificant fringe, and, even so, they appeared in a Madrasi garb. Again, I had not yet seen enough foreigners to distinguish them always as Non-Indians and thus get a negative definition of my countrymen. At that moment, had I been shown an

Afghan and told that he was a Punjabee, I would have believed it. Conversely, had an Assamese been shown and declared to be a Tibetan, I would have believed it too. Still, with all this, at that solemn moment when the train was rushing towards the ship which was to take me across the black waters away from my home, relations, friends and countrymen, all these assumed a rosy appearance. The ridiculous orthodoxy-ridden unprogressive and decadent village became for a moment more important than Bombay or England. The dark, ill-ventilated room where I was born was to me more sacred than Benares or Gaya, for that was the first piece of God's earth that my infant eyes saw. The brook flowing close to my house occupied a larger space in my mental horizon than even the divine Ganges which I had never seen and which in any case I could never call mine. The village temple with its sleepy priest, unrepaired walls and selfish worshippers appeared to me to be the very ideal of a holy place, the defects having receded into the background at the idea of long separation. The relations, even the relations, appeared to be not such a bad lot. I convinced myself that they were all good at heart though the exigencies of the joint family and the narrow atmosphere of the village had reacted on them somewhat badly and warped their otherwise good natures. After all, I had no reason to believe that any other Hindu had a better

set of relations. At marriages and funerals they had always mustered in their full strength; and that is, in the last analysis, what is wanted from relations. At that moment, I would have welcomed any relation, however distant, with a very warm heart in spite of all his past record and future potentialities. The same favourable reaction was evident as regards friends. The few of them who were real friends appeared to me then to be models of friendship despite the many unfriendly acts they had done. And acquaintances, even acquaintances, appeared to be approaching friends. I sincerely regretted that I had not had the time to cultivate their acquaintance further though now I may perhaps agree that it was for the best. As for my countrymen, such was my exalted mood that day that I would have embraced a bearded Pathan from the North-West or a beardless Assamese from the North-East on being assured that they were Indians. It pained me even to part from the Mahrattas, Gujaratis and Parsis sitting in the same compartment though I did not know any of them. I looked at them with brotherly eyes, but those prosaic people made no response. So, I could not express to them the sorrow I felt at parting from them.

The second thought that oppressed me was the consciousness that I was to live for at least three years in a far-off foreign land where the people

were of a different race, colour and creed. To live in a land where all people were white and all English was something of a plunge into the unknown. The very little experience of Englishmen I had till then had been somewhat varied in results. The professors had been very kind, and gentlemen to the fingernails, but even they, with a single exception, showed unmistakably their belief in the innate inferiority of Indian civilization. Their theory of anthropology culminating in the evolution of the Teutons, or latterly the Anglo-Saxons, their theory of religious evolution culminating in Christianity, their theory of economics culminating in the standard of comfort adopted by the white men in the west and the monstrous large-scale productions which throttled our cottage industries, their theory of politics culminating in western world-empires, crushing the soul of our village life, all these were repellent to me and made me feel that I had little in common with them. Even less had I in common with the missionaries. These disinterested gentlemen, anxious to extend the empire of Christ and to save human souls from the eternal Hell-fire to which the vast majority were ultimately destined, shocked me even early in life by their greater eagerness to convert rather than to spread the gospel of Christ, by their ignorant condemnation of Hinduism, and by their offensive patronage. How many rivers are running

into sand when gardens lie unirrigated, was my thought then. Even in India with its small Christian population there were so many missionaries How many thousands more would there be in England, I thought, and the thought made me shudder. I was no enemy of Christianity. I had read the Bible and admired many of its teachings, but the same teachings coming from a missionary had somewhow got an unpleasant jarring effect in the course of its transmission. And missionaries in India are very forward. They waylay you at Hindu festivals, they even meet you at the gates of the temples with their coarse music and heartless caricatures of Hindu religious teachings. In the nine years which have passed since then the spirit of the missionaries has changed very much for the better. Some of them have begun to learn as well as to teach, there is much less of that blatant self-sufficiency and shallow dogmatism found a decade ago when theorising about Hindu doctrines, and there is a growing desire to spread the gospel of Christ and win Him souls rather than heads. The rest of the Englishmen were more or less strangers to me. The English official was reputed to be brave and impartial as between Indians but had also the reputation of being haughty, reserved and unduly severe. The English trader was universally known for his high prices which were always fixed and unalterable. Indians of the middle classes

never entered his shop except to feast their eyes and sometimes also to find out the description of a particular article and order for it from some neighbouring Indian merchant who would charge less. The English soldier was a person who connoted to the Indians then unlimited rudeness and reckless courage, a being whom no middle class Indian ever desired to meet anywhere. The idea of living for three years in a country inhabited solely by Englishmen was therefore none too enchanting. Still, I had a desire to go to England and see for myself how life was like there. Moreover, my wordly prospects would be considerably improved by taking a degree at an English University. With all this, the prospect of a protracted stay in England did cause me considerable anxiety then, most unnecessary anxiety as it turned out later.

Then, there was the uncertainty of being able to get into the I.C.S. and the ruin which would ensue if I failed. My continued success at school and college had made me self-confident. Never for a moment did I seriously believe that I would fail to get through any examination; but, still, there was the vague anxiety that I was staking my all on this; and what certainty was there that I would come within the number wanted for that particular year? This was a new kind of examination altogether from those to which I had been accustomed. No fixed percentage for a pass, no such thing as a

pass even. It was a competition in which the topmost would be chosen. What guarantee was there that I would be among these topmost? What would happen if I failed to get through? How to pay back the loan scholarship? No doubt, there would remain the English University degree which would secure me a decent job in some college in India. But that would be but a poor substitute for the original idea. And what is more, there was no guarantee at all that any such decent job could be got. Here was I going to the land of the Angles impelled mainly by a desire to improve my material prospects, and here were the foundations of the castle in the air shaking.

The fourth anxiety was regarding the possibility of remaining a vegetarian in England. Vegeterianism was with me then a religious dogma which could never be questioned rather than a settled conviction arrived at after close reasoning. But its hold was equally strong. To cease to be a vegetarian was to me to cease to be a Brahmin and to cut myself off from the untold generations gone by. It was practically committing religious and moral suicide. Many people had told me that vegetarianism was impossible of practice in England. I had pooh-poohed at them all, but now there crept a doubt into my mind. Could all these be fools and I alone wise?

Then there was the oppressive thought that for

the first time in my life I was to be alone, and that too not for a day or two but for at least three years. Never before had I been absolutely in the midst of strangers for even a complete day. Always there had been with me some persons whom I knew. Now I was to be alone. Not a soul did I know among the intending passengers. Nor did I know anybody in England. This meant that I had to take care of my own purse, a thing which I had never done before, invent my own amusements, and try to make some acquaintances soon with a view to while away the time. A loving band of friends and relatives were with me in the train. In less than two hours they would all leave me and I would be alone on the wide, wide sea. The multitude of strangers on board the ship would only serve to intensify my loneliness by the sad thought that in such a crowd I had not a single friend.

The last thought was about the immediate problems on board the ship. These included the possibility of sea-sickness, the possible unpleasantness with European fellow-passengers, the well-grounded fear of the diet given on board the ship, and the queer ways of eating. Sea-sickness was a kind of bugbear with me then. When Lord Nelson was a victim to this malady, I did not dare to hope to escape from it in spite of some curious contrivances called cholera belts given to me by the Bombay supplier and prophesied by that worthy to be sure

specifics against sea-sickness if worn over the stomach. The almost certain prospect of incessant vomitting was not altogether delightful to contemplate upon. The possibility of unpleasantness with European passengers, however ridiculous the idea in the light of after—experience, was then a very real problem to be thought out. The many stories I had heard of European high-handedness towards Indians in trains had created in me an impression that such incidents were inevitable whenever the two races met. A friend of mine, whose imagination always delighted in morbid details, put the situation thus. " If you happen to be in the lower berth and the European in the upper, he will purposely tread on you as if by accident while getting up to his berth. If, on the contrary, you happen to be in the upper berth, the fellow will swear and curse every time you get up." The argument appeared to me to be conclusive The Goanese cooks were dreaded by all honest eaters as the enemies of good cooking. I had no reason to feel particularly optimistic on this score as; in addition to the difficulties in common with others, I had also my own particular difficulties as a vegetarian. Then, there was the problem of knives and forks. It is not commonly realized that it is as difficult for those who have not used knives and forks to use them as it is for those who habitually use them to do without them. I had never once used these

before getting on board the ship. To eat along with all kinds of unknown people at the same table was itself a source of not inconsiderable anxiety. To have my eating watched by utter strangers was bad enough. To watch them eat meat and fish was worse. But all this had to be done, and I had to prepare myself for these.

While all these thoughts were coursing in my mind, the train was rushing to Victoria Terminus. It was a non-stop train, the wretched thing, and seemed bent upon taking me to the black waters as early as possible. As soon as we reached Victoria Terminus, we got down and went to the Alexandra Docks. There was a medical examination for all the passengers. A doctor was sitting there, and all passengers were asked to file past in singles. He referred to a list of passengers and did his work with extraordinary quickness, which was not quite compatible with maximum efficiency. When my turn came, he asked me my name. I said "A. S. Panchapakesa Ayyar." He looked up his list and said "There is no such person on this list. There is only one Mr. A. S. P. Ayyar." "I am he" said I. "Then please call yourself Mr. A. S. P. Ayyar and don't confuse me by saying that you are Mr. A. S.—What is it—Ayyar." Then he felt my pulse and let me go to the other side. The eventful medical examination was over! The passport—checking officer gazed at my passport with lynx

eyes and read out "Aiylam Subramania Iyer Panchapakesa Ayyar" and asked me why I had not insisted on the ship's authorities putting my full name on their list. I said that they were not amenable to my authority and that moreover it would take up three lines. "Oh, they charge you heavily enough" he declared most truthfully. "Pass on." And I passed on.

I went on board the ship and was shown my berth by a cabin steward. It was facing the sea and had no berth above or below it. The cabin had two other berths on the other side, one lower and one upper. To my relief, I found that both the remaining berths were apparently to be occupied by Indians so far as I could judge by names. The occupant of the upper berth was Mr. G., a Lingayat gentleman from Bombay and that of the lower berth was Mr. A, a Wahabi gentleman from the Punjab. They had not yet arrived when I entered the cabin. I have always a healthy dread of parting with my luggage for any length of time. So, though the rules of the ship had clearly instructed me to keep all luggage except small articles absolutely necessary for daily use in the hold and though three different kinds of labels "With the passenger" "Wanted on voyage" and "Not wanted on voyage" had been supplied to me, I had mentally resolved never to trust any of my things to the hold and had consequently pasted only the first two forms on every

one of my articles and had conserved all the forms of the third variety for future emergencies. As soon as I entered the cabin, I had all my things put under my berth and was delighted to find the whole space beautifully filled in with a giant pine-wood case containing my books jutting out a wee bit. Having thus finished this important preliminary, I sat down on the bed and looked out of the port-hole at my friends and relations standing opposite. Soon Mr. G. came with his enormous trunks and filled the whole space under the other lower berth and half the cabin with them. Just when he had finished this herculean task and was eyeing his trunks fondly, Mr. A. came with a goodly number of packages of various shapes and sizes. With an eagle glance he found out that all the available space and more had already been occupied. He did not think it fair to expostulate with me since his berth was not on my side of the cabin. But he was wroth with Mr. G. for taking away his share of the space. He was speechless with rage for some time, and, then, when he had found his speech, said "I say, I have paid as much as you have and am entitled to half the space. Give me half the space" and without more ado began pulling out Mr. G's trunks. Mr. G. asked "Why not put some of your luggage under the other gentleman's berth?" "What!" replied Mr. A. with his fine sense of what was what, "Will it be fair to do

so when he has paid twice as much as we have? Certainly not." Mr, A's brilliant idea that I had paid twice as much as he arose from the fact that there were two berths on his side whereas there was only one on mine. I thought it prudent not to correct the mistake since it was not in my interest to do so. Mr. G. watched half his trunks being pulled out with unconcealed chagrin. When this work of displacement was over, Mr. A's difficulties began. All his articles would never go into the space so cleared; one pet case especially, 72 inches by 18 inches, containing, as I found out later, choice Sialkot tennis and badminton rackets and footballs, would perforce not go in. To send it to the hold would spell certain ruin for his delicate ware; so at any rate declared Mr. A, and I for one believed it. But there was no other go. Most reluctantly, Mr. A prepared to part with it and sundry other articles. "A pity if it is to be put into the hold" said he, "Some wretched passenger's heavy lumber may be placed over it, and, then, ..." He had not the heart to finish the sentence. But both Mr. G. and I understood the meaning and even mentally heard the crash of the long packet and the noise of the breaking of Mr. A's heart at the catastrophe. It would have been inhuman not to suggest a remedy. So, I volunteered "Well, Mr. A, why not affix a 'wanted on voyage' label on it? Then you can get it every

week here and can satisfy yourself about its state." "Excellent," said Mr. A "and it won't be put into the hold also. But you know that I won't be wanting this package on voyage. How can I declare that I want it?" "Mr. A," replied I "you shoudn't be so particular. Nobody on a ship is, or should be. Besides, you would be wanting to see at least once a week the state of this package. So, I can't see where the lie comes in." Mr. A was convinced and straightway affixed two "Wanted on Voyage" labels on either side of the package, which was then handed over to the cabin boy with special instructions to use supercare. Now came another difficulty, for difficulties, like misfortunes, never come single. There were a good number of unlucky packages of both Mr. A and Mr. G which were fated to be sent to the hold, and they had not stocked enough "not wanted on voyage" forms perhaps because they had never thought that they would have to use these commitment warrants. But fortunately I was in a position to help without the least inconvenience to me. I had not used a single one of these forms and had naturally an abounding stock of them. Promptly opening my railbag I handed over to Mr. A. twice the number of forms wanted by Messrs. A and G together and was profusely thanked by Mr. A who in his own simple way said "Are you sure you won't be wanting any of these, yourself?" "Absolutely." said I, "These

are all spare forms" and in fact they were, I having never used any such form nor having any necessity for any of them, thanks to the situation of my berth. Why, I even helped to paste some of these forms on Mr. A's packages ! After this operation was complete, all these packages as also a goodly number of Mr. G's packages were removed to the hold.

Then Mr. A asked me " How far are you going ?" "To London" I replied. "So am I" said Mr. A. "And so am I " chimed in Mr. G. " You appear to be a Madrasi " said Mr. G. to me. " Your eyes have not deceived you " I replied. " I am indeed a Madrasi. And you, you seem to be a Bombay man." " You are right" replied Mr. G. " I am a Lingayat from Bombay." " And I, I am a Pathan from the north-west " said Mr. A impressively. "I am so glad all three of us are Indians " said Mr. A, and it sounded curious to me that a Pathan from the northwest should find greater pleasure in being cooped up with a Madrasi Brahmin and a Bombay Lingayat than with two Europeans. But I had also felt relieved on finding that my two companions in the cabin were Indians. I dare say, Messrs. A and G had also had much the same groundless fears as myself regarding the behaviour of Europeans. " What are you going to England for ? " asked Mr. A of me. " For sitting for the I. C. S. and taking a degree at Oxford ' I replied. " For the very

same purpose as myself!" said Mr. G. "Well I am going to England to study for the barrister's course and also to advertise Sialkot sporting materials. If you were to see the excellent samples of tennis and badminton rackets that I am carrying with me in that long package, you will be surprised" said Mr. A. "But Mr. A, do you really think that Sialkot articles will find a sale in England which has itself many firms for sporting materials ? Is it not like carrying coals to Newcastle?" I asked. "No," said Mr. A, "Perhaps you may be right regarding ordinary sports materials, but not as regards those which I carry. Besides, cheapness tells in England as elsewhere and Sialkot things are cheap, d-d cheap. Again, suppose I get only a few orders, what do I lose? I have to go to England anyway for my barrister's course; why not do a stroke of business as well? Why not earn a penny for every pound spent?" The argument was convincing, and there was nothing more said about it.

"Come up; the ship will sail in half an hour, let us see our friends standing outside. From the deck we can see them much better" said Mr. A. So, all three of us prepared to go up. "Mr. A," said I, "Suppose somebody comes into the cabin when we are up and steals all our things?" "I shall kill the fellow" said Mr. A, and his demeanour showed that he meant it. "Oh yes, if you catch him" said

I, "but where is the chance of catching him once the ship sails and he is on *terra firma* with our articles ?" "Then, what shall we do ?" asked Mr. A "for go up we must." "Well" said I, "let us lock the cabin and post the cabin steward to watch it." "Excellent" said Mr. A. We rang the bell. The cabin boy, Antao, came. We locked the cabin, asked him to look after it, and went up.

For half an hour we gazed at our relatives and friends and at the dear motherland which we were about to leave. Bombay City, equally foreign to all three of us, appeared then to be representing Mother India despite all her foreign tinsel and superficial cosmopolitan appearance. The half hour sped away rapidly. The bustle on board the ship, the innumerable people coming in with all kinds of bundles, the mail bags and other things being stowed in, the confused noises outside, all helped to pass time rapidly.

The inevitable moment came, the ship weighed anchor, the draw-bridge was raised, and with one or two whistles the ship began to sail amidst frantic shoutings and wavings from humans on board and on the shore. Soon the ship gathered speed, and the tall buildings of Bombay began to diminish in size. The distant landscape asserted its superiority steadily over the man-made usurper called Bombay City. Soon, all too soon, Bombay was a spot on the horizon, and the coast of India was a faint

brown line on the fringe of the ever—widening blue. A few minutes more, the brown line had disappeared and we were in the midst of the black waters.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE BLACK WATERS—BOMBAY TO ADEN.

ALL three of us came down into the cabin. "We are now on the bosom of the black-waters" I said. My two friends agreed. "For seventeen days more we shall have to be like this" said I. "So long as that?" queried Mr. A. with the quietness of resignation. "Possibly longer" I replied, "The sea is like a glass; it is quite pleasant." 'Yes' said Mr. G. "But they say that none can escape sea-sickness." "I hope I shall" said I, "I have got a cholera belt." "That may be a protection against cholera, but nothing can protect a man from sea-sickness" remarked Mr. G. with an air of finality. A very true prophecy, so far as he was concerned. I demurred, but still had small faith in the belt myself though I was wearing it next to my stomach much to my infinite discomfort in that stifling heat. "I say," said Mr. A. "What is that bell ringing for?" "Lunch, I presume" I replied. At that moment the cabin boy came and brought me a telegram from an old teacher wishing me a

happy voyage. "I wish somebody would send me a telegram" said Mr. A. "Even formal good wishes will have great value now. It is the first time I am on the black waters." "So also with me" said Mr. G. "I am also in the same predicament" declared I, "We shall all have to watch the effect of the sea on us." "No good effects, I can vouch for it" said Mr. G. "I shall be glad if no evil effects are produced" said Mr. A. "It is a plunge into the unknown" I admitted "Well, now, we must go for lunch." "Should we dress?" asked Mr. G.; "I am going as I am" said I. "No dressing for lunch" declared Mr. A. who was the most versed among us three regarding European ways. "Then off we go" said I "By the way, have any of you used knives and forks before?" "No" replied Messrs. A. and G. "The hand is far better than knives and forks" said Mr. A. "Undoubtedly, it is more handy" said I. "It is also far better, medically" said Mr. A, "Can you say why?" "I think I can" said I. "The forks and knives you use might have been used by others, but not so your hand. Hence you never run the risk of being infected by other people's germs this way." "Excellent" said Mr. A. "you have hit the nail on the head." "Mr. A," said I "What about this problem of using knives and forks?" "We must manage it somehow" he replied. What do we care if we are somewhat awkward at first?

Surely, you don't mind the opinions of these Europeans ?" "Not I" said I "After all, we were not born with knives and forks." "Mr. Ayyar," said Mr. G. "I am a vegetarian. How shall I manage?" "I am also a vegetarian" said I "We must manage somehow. I expect we shall get almost reduced to skeletons before we reach London. We ought to have brought some fruits with us Unfortunately, I have not brought any with me" "Nor have I" said Mr. G. "What shall we do now ?" "We shall go and arrange with the steward" said I "Now, let us all go."

So we went into tho dining room, There we found a third vegetarian, Mr. M. a pearl merchant from Cambay. All three of us went to the steward and told him that we were vegetarians and that some special arrangements should be made for us. "All right" said that Englishman "I shall ask the cooks to give you fish" "We don't eat fish" replied I. "Are not fish vegetables ?" he asked in surprise. "No" said I. "Then I shall ask them to give you eggs" said he. "We don't eat eggs also" said I. "Why, are not even eggs vegetables ?" asked the steward in utter surprise. "No" said I. "Do you want to eat only potatoes and cabbage ?" asked he. "No" said I "We eat also rice, and other cereals, and, of course, fruits." "All right, then," said he "You shall have porridge, rice and pepper-water and plenty of potatoes and cabbage. Will that do?"

"Yes," said I "Only, please see that if potatoes are fried they are done so only in oil and not in fat. Also, make ample provision for fruits which are absolutely essential for keeping us fit." "I understand;" said he "You are the extremest vegetarians I have ever seen. Personally speaking, I can hardly see how milk is a vegetable though you don't object to it." "Milk, ghee, curds, and buttermilk are what we may call customary and religious vegetables, having been sanctioned by custom and approved by religion," said I. The steward laughed, and we retired, thanking him for his attention to our comforts We had to wait for fifteen minutes before we could get our things, And when we got them they were not worth the waiting. The Goanese cooks on board the ship, whatever their other merits, were most certainly not expert vegetarian cooks. But we were not hungry and so did not mind the badness of the porridge, rice, pepper-water, potatoes and cabbage. The only fruits supplied were oranges which resembled their kind merely in the appearance of their skins, having the unmitigated taste of limes. But I have never fought shy of limes and so ate three of these sour oranges. Then, taking a good drink of water, I made an informal exit from the dining room. I was soon joined by Mr. A who declared emphatically that the Italian steamers were far better than the P & O. in the matter of meals. "How do you

know that ?" I asked. "Because," said he "some of my friends who travelled by those steamers have told me" "Then why didn't you book your passage by one of those?" I asked. "We are not always wise" said Mr. A "I preferred the P. and O. since I would thereby reach London a day earlier and since I do not know Italian.'

Then we went up the deck and sat on our deck chairs. Some passengers had not been wise enough to provide themselves with deck chairs and were forced to hire out some very dirty and disreputable-looking chairs from the deck steward for a sum which was slightly higher than the price of new deck chairs. The deck steward was busy letting out these chairs and also making arrangements for various kinds of games. It was simply surprising to see how many varieties of games could be played on the deck. Many passengers took part in these. A less praiseworthy thing was a kind of gambling on the ship's speed. Each person had to contribute one shilling and guess how many miles the ship would do that day. The whole collections would be divided among those who got the correct figure or the nearest approximation to it in case none got the correct figure itself. Some clever ones used to ask the ship's officers on the sly and get almost accurate figures Perhaps this gambling thrives because of the tediousness of a sea voyage and the urgent necessity to create some kind of

excitement to make time pass quickly. Some passengers were vigorously walking on the deck in order to have a little exercise.

That day, I saw some more Indians. Messrs. L, B and S, were the other Indians on board the ship Mr. L. was a Punjab Hindu who volunteered to me the information that he had been to England nine times before. He was extremely anglicized and was a regular smoking furnace, having always a cigar or cigarette in his mouth. He came to me and said " Young man, you are going to England. If you want to remain there, you ought to be like the English. 'Why do you still stick to your vegetarianism and water drinking? ." I said that we should go to England only to pick up the good things there and not the bad things. " Taste meat and wine and see whether they are not good " said he. " I have no desire to taste them " said I. " Ah, it is this type of mind that I hate " said Mr. L. " Condemning a thing without trying it oneself." " According to your argument," said I " an honest man cannot condemn a thief without trying to thieve himself, and a good woman cannot condemn a bad woman without following the bad ways herself." "Similes don't prove anything " said Mr. L, and thus our first conversation ended. Mr. M was very weak and lean. The sea voyage seemed to upset him completely. " The sea looked attractive from the beach at Cambay," he told me

confidentially "but it has lost half its attractions now" "Why?" I asked "The sea is not at all rough" "No" replied he "but the smell is awful, and the food, it is simply execrable." I readily agreed and mentally registered Mr. M as a possible victim of sea-sickness in the near future. For it was and is my firm belief that one who broods on the smell of the ship and the sea is on the high-road to sea-sickness, Mr. B was a Parsi gentleman from Bombay who was going to England for studying medicine. He was a man of few words. Mr. S. was a Bengali who was going to England to take the barrister's course He was bursting with eagerness to express himself in Bengali, but as none of the other Indians in the second class understood that language, he had to stop himself in mid career and begin in English. No wonder, he told me one day. "Mr. Ayyar, what a pity we have always to talk in English!" The sentiment was just, but as I myself did not know Hindustani and as I could not conceive of any common language for India except Hindustani I had to content myself with a laconic 'It is a pity, Mr. S."

Messrs. L and B were not inclined to mix with us freely perhaps because they were older and perhaps also because we were so unacquainted with English manners and customs as to make them desire not to be seen in our company. But Mr. A, though very much older than we and perhaps older

than Messrs. B and L, preferred to associate with us whenever he came on deck which was but seldom since he preferred to sleep on his bed in the cabin during the long intervals between breakfast and lunch, and lunch and dinner. This, I learnt later, was to avoid sea-sickness though the principle underlying the practice was thoroughly wrong-headed inasmuch as he who avoids the sea most almost invariably gets the sea-sickness soonest. Mr. A's inclination to join us rather than Messrs. L and B might probably have been due to his also being quite unaccustomed to English manners.

We used to sit, the five of us, sometimes in the companions' room, sometimes in the library and sometimes on the deck. We generally avoided the smoking room as we were not smokers; and since the library was situated in the smoking room we did not frequent the library; nor were there many good books there though some ships' libraries contain excellent books. We did not go down to tea as we thought that it was charged for extra and did not think it worth it. Messrs. L and B were sitting on the deck after their tea when Mr. S and I were walking along. We had just seen a notice requesting all passengers who saw anything on fire on board the ship to go and ring the ship's bell at once three times. Seeing Mr. L light his cigar, I said to Mr. S. excitedly "Go at once and

ring the ship's bell three times." "Whatever for?" asked Mr. L. "Because there is a fire on board the ship" said I. "Where, where?" asked Messrs. L and B in one voice. "Why, your cigar is on fire" said I to Mr. L and walked away with Mr. S., leaving Mr. L to swear to himself. Some time afterwards, I sat by myself in a corner of the deck watching the sea which had just begun to roll. Soon I was disturbed by Mr. S. who came and told me that an English passenger had sworn at him rudely for going up and down so often. I felt this conduct as most outrageous and decided to vindicate our rights against all attacks. It seems the passenger had remarked to Mr S "Why the devil do you go up and down like this?" I went down purposely to my cabin though I had no business whatsoever there. The man, who seemed to have had a drop too much, shouted out "I am sick of these niggers." "Your sickness is incurable" said I "for the niggers number many hundred millions and are increasing rapidly." The man looked ferociously at me but said nothing. When I returned to the deck a minute later, he shouted out "D-n me if I will stand all this nonsense." "You will have to," said I "for I have paid as much as you have and have just as much right as you." At this moment Mr. A. came up. "What, is this a conspiracy among you to worry me?" said the irritated Englishman and went away.

Never more did he grumble at us for our going up and coming down.

Soon it was time for dinner. I went down into the cabin. Mr. A. was putting on his dress suit. I did not want to put on mine since it was so absurdly made as to look a cross between a funeral suit, a dress suit and a Jodhpuri riding suit. Unaware though I was of the latest English fashions and more or less insensible to criticisms as regards details of dress, I knew by instinct that my so-called dress suit would be most ridiculous if worn as a dress suit and only slightly less ridiculous if worn on other occasions. Mr. G. had no dress suit. So both Mr. G. and myself went in ordinary flannels to the dining room whereas most of the passengers were in dress suits. I was able to see at a glance what a wise resolution it was not to have worn my wonderful dress suit. Being in ordinary flannel trousers and coat might raise some comment but not any laughter or ridicule like the so-called dress suit.

The sea had begun to roll heavily. Messrs. A., G., M and I sat at the same table. The steward had placed only the usual five oranges on the table even though we had specially requested for a plentiful supply of fruits which we said were the mainstay of our diet. In spite of all his tall promises he had not provided any vegetarian dishes worth the name. Boiled rice, boiled potatoes and

boiled cabbage represented all that a vegetarian could eat. The principle seemed to be that since we ourselves omitted a lot voluntarily from our diet we could afford to miss a lot more. That day I found for the first time meat and drink being served. I had always a lively horror of seeing meat. The mere mention of beef or mutton or pork or veal would conjure up before my mind a milking cow, a bleating sheep, a grunting pig or a gambolling calf. On one occasion, when I was thirteen years old, I remember having been horribly shocked by seeing meat exposed for sale near the Residency at Trivandrum. I saw something red hanging, and that was about all. But it was quite enough to shock me. Needless to say, there was no separate table for vegetarians. At our table, for instance, besides Messrs. G and M and myself, who were vegetarians, there was the non-vegetarian Mr. A. When meat was served for Mr. A, all the rest of us had a look of unspeakable horror and disgust on our faces. We turned our faces away. It was not the pleasantest thing for Mr. A. who, turning to Mr. G., said "Why do you look like that? Have you no manners?" We said nothing. Now I can see that we were in the wrong. At that time my impression was that Mr. A was adding insult to injury. Before long we found wine bottles being placed on all the neighbouring tables. This was also a shocking thing

for me. I was for the first time in the midst of drinkers. I felt very uncomfortable. Fortunately, none at our table were addicated to drink; so I was spared the sight of a liquor bottle on our table. Soon, another funny incident took place. We vegetarians got so little to eat that we fell upon the oranges. There were only five in all for us four. I was very hungry and so ate two of those. Mr. G. also ate two, and Mr. M ate the odd fifth. Mr. A., who had not yet come to the stage of dessert, was furious. "You vegetarians are worse than Englishmen" he said in an angry tone "Fancy your eating up all the oranges leaving nothing for me!' We apologized and told him that the steward had promised more oranges than usual for us and that we really stood in dire need of fruits. "Meat is no compensation for fruits" said Mr. A. with dignity. I called the steward and requested him to supply Mr. A. with two more oranges. That worthy looked most displeased, but complied with our request. And, so long as he did that, we didn't mind his displeasure. But we did mind his remark. "Hereafter, gentlemen, you shouldn't exceed your allotment." "How can we do that?" said I "we get so little to eat; without fruits we shall starve." "You ought to have brought some of your own" added the steward. "We haven't, though," I replied "So, for the present, you will have to supply us vegetarians with

double rations as regards fruits." "I shall see," said the steward and went away. I heartily regretted having taken neither fruits nor eatables from home, and looked forward to slow starvation.

The meal over, I went up to the companions' room and the deck and strolled about here and there for some time. I could not join the card parties since I did not know to play cards, card-playing having been considered in our puritanical family as one of the seven deadly sins. Nor did I feel any curiosity to learn it as I felt a moral repugnance to learn a game which led to so much gambling. But all this meant that I could not join the others and while away the time. The ship's library was none too good, and I found hardly any book there fit to be read. My mind was also full of all kinds of thoughts and anxieties. I went to the deck and walked six or seven times round and round, but all this artificial attempt to generate gaiety out of depression resulted only in a ludicrous failure, and so I went down into my cabin to adopt the last remedy, that remedy which has not failed me as yet at any crisis, sleep. Of late, it has been the fashion with some doctors to call sleep a lamentable waste of time and even a disease, and some of these busybodies are breathlessly trying to devise some method by which to eliminate sleep and restore the lost hours for work. As if men are born for work and work alone! If sleep were to be

eliminated, murders will increase ten-fold and suicides hundred-fold. Many an evil thought is drowned by sleeping over it; conversely, care-charmer sleep is the greatest medicine for weary souls. The very doctors who preach against it have not entirely abandoned sleep. If they did so for one month, no more will be heard of the disease of sleep, "the great waster of time!" Well, as I said, I resolved to try my infallible remedy and went to my cabin. I found my cabin-mates, Messrs. A and G, already in their beds but not yet asleep. Mr A told me "Mr. Ayyar, how are we to pass eighteen days on board this ship? We are like orphans here." I agreed, but said "Where there is a will, there is a way." "Oh, yes" said Mr. A. "But the will will be crushed out in two days if things go on like this, and then there will be no way." "Sleep out the eighteen days" said I "Easy enough for you at your age but not so for me who am past middle age" said Mr. A. dolefully. "Mr. G. how do you feel like?" I asked. "I feel the rolling very much" replied Mr. G. Sea-sickness was in sight. No more word was said. I put on my pyjamas, put out the electric light and went to bed and in a second was in the fairy lands of sleep. My dreams were all horrible, but that didn't matter so long as my thoughts were away from the loneliness, the monotony and the starvation on board the ship.

At 5 A. M. I rose and putting on one of those blessed kimonas given by the Bombay supplier was walking towards the bath-room when the stewardess who happened to be walking on the other side of the passage, shouted out "This way, madam, those are the gentlemen's bath-rooms." As soon as she was out of sight, I rushed back to my cabin, took off the precious dressing gown, bundled it up most unceremoniously, and thrust it into the bottom of my suit case, never to be used again. Then, in sheer vexation and chagrin, I lay down again contemplating on the many misfits I had received from the Bombay supplier. Worried by this, I fell asleep again and woke up an hour and a half later and then rushed to the bath-rooms. All were occupied. So I stood outside in my pyjamas with a towel and soap under my arm. Two Englishmen were also standing in front of the bath-rooms apparently with intent to take baths but at that moment engaged in conversation. Soon three others joined them. Presently, a bath-room door opened and a man came out. I was proceeding towards the bath-room thus vacated when one of the two men who were originally in the room said "Excuse me, it is my turn." I was very much surprised "Have you got turns for baths too ?" I asked. "Of course," he replied "But if you are in a hurry you can have your bath first with the permission of this gentleman also"

he added, pointing to his comrade. I was abashed at thus having appeared to be stealing a march over the others. I replied that I was in no particular hurry and waited resignedly in that room with no one to talk to and with no mind to return to my cabin lest I should lose my bath altogether. Soon two more bath-room doors opened. I had not noticed this and was standing quietly when one of the three who had come later told me "Your turn now." I at once rushed to the bath-room, wondering at the sense of discipline and order of the Englishmen who regulated even the order of bathing according to approved constitutional canons. The bath was quite refreshing. The bath-tub was full of warm salt water, and there was a bucketful of fresh water for washing off the salt-water from the body. It was the first occasion when I took a bath after the European fashion in a tub, but I found no difficulty at all as the bath tub was like a small tank and could easily contain me. At first when the water became rather dirty with the soap, I was wondering how a man could rise up quite clean. But the problem was easy. I turned off the dirty water, cleaned the tub, got a fresh supply of hot water by turning on the tap, and had a luxurious bath. It was no doubt a bit of a problem to manage with the small bucketful of fresh water. I, however, managed it quite well by using the fresh water as we do oil on days of oil-bath.

Considerably refreshed by the bath, I came back to my cabin and found both my campanions still in their beds and the cabin boy Antao just bringing in the morning tea which consisted of a small cup of tea, two or three biscuits of a particularly thin variety, a plantain fruit which was of the size of a little finger, and an orange whose sourness could not be equalled by any lemon. I was quite hungry and so ate up my share. Then I loudly called Messrs. A and G by their names and asked them to wake up. This they at last did. Mr. A rubbed his eyes and asked me, " What is this ? " pointing to his morning tea." " Your morning tea " I said· " Where is the tea-pot ? " he queried. " There" said I pointing to the cup. " I say," said Mr. A. " You seem to have bathed already." " Of course, I have " I replied with some pride, " I have not only bathed but have also taken my tea ; yours is getting cold. " " I shall just have a wash, clean my teeth, say my prayers, and take it " said Mr. A, and got up and proceeded to clean his teeth in the basin in the cabin Meanwhile, Mr. G. was groaning in his upper berth. " What is the matter with you ? " I asked. " The sea-sickness " he said, and then with remarkable rapidity got down from his berth, went to the bucket kept for that purpose outside the cabin, and vomitted as if he would vomit his whole stomach out. I was greatly impressed and made not a little anxious by this

scene. The expected had come to pass as regards Mr. G. But who could guarantee that any would escape it ? Mr. G., after the fury of his attack was over, was horribly weak but yet managed to whisper his firm conviction that none would escape sea-sickness. I believed in this dogma then though I now know how untrue it is I regretted that I had not taken any lemons with me, but secretly congratulated myself on the fact that the ship's oranges would beat any lemons. Mr. A. had by now proceeded to eat his tea. "Ah," he said, "What a horrible orange!" "Mr. A" said I "It is for your good. The orange will stop sea-sickness." "I see" said Mr. A, "But hard is the lot of the passenger on board a ship." "Undoubtedly" said I

Later, I went on deck and had a walk I met a friendly Irishman called Griffiths. He chaffed me about some change of customs. "What will become of you when you return to India ?" he asked, "you have dined along with men of other castes, you have drunk water brought by Goanese, you have even eaten food cooked by them, you will have to perform a costly *prayaschittam*."* I laughed and said nothing. I had resolved, even when I started, never to perform any *prayaschittam*. There was a missionary family on board the ship. They were Swiss by nationality and were returning to their

* A purificatory ceremony involving much feasting of priests and Brahmins. Literally, "Pure again."

native land after some years of stay in Ladakh They had a number of robust children who were busy doing gymnastic feats on the stairs. The husband and wife were serious people, as became their vocation. As the companion room was very small and close, I could not but overhear some part of their conversation especially as it was conducted fairly loudly. "Prices have gone up terribly in Neufchatel as in all other places. The war has done it" said the lady to her husband whose agreement was expressed by an elongation of the face. I too reflected on this. I would have to spend twice the sum spent by students in pre-war days, I thought, and the thought made me sad.

That day, at about 4-50 P,M., while I was on deck with Mr. A., Mr. Griffiths came along, and asked me "Why didn't you come to tea? you don't like it, perhaps?" "I don't think the tea worth its price" said I. "What price! It is free" said Mr. Griffiths. Mr. A and I were both startled. Mr. A said to me "Fancy their trying to cheat us of our tea! Let us go down at once." So, down we went in a trice and found the tea things being removed. We asked the steward to bring us tea urging that we had not had any even the previous day. The man agreed with a wry face. "This is downright Indian punctuality" he said. "Yes" I replied, unabashed, "We are a bit late, but that is because we were not informed about this at all till now.

Tomorrow we shall be punctual." "I can quite predict that" replied the steward. We had a hearty tea. This tea was a good make-up for the starvation lunch and dinner, and I congratulated myself on getting the information at least then. Needless to say, I never missed any more tea on board the ship.

The sea was rolling somewhat heavily, but the weather was beautiful and I enjoyed walking on deck. There were many games on deck but I took part in none of them partly because I feared that I would not be welcome and partly because I did not know those games. After dinner I pulled my chair to a sequestered place on the deck and peered out into the darkness for a long time. I was woke up from this reverie by Mr. A. who came and asked me whether I wanted to take part in a whist drive. I declined without the least hesitation and went on gazing at the sea. The dark waters had a great fascination for me. I thought of the scene where God, taking the form of a fish,* saved the Vedas from the measureless depths after slaying Hayagriva; I thought of the divine tortoise † which saved the world from the onrushing waters and bore it on its back. I thought of the sea of milk, of Narayana of the evermoving waters, and of the day of the great flood at the end of the Kali Age when the whole world will be covered with miles of water

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* Mina Avatar. † Kachchapavatara.

and twelve suns will shine. I thought too of the Ancient Mariner and of the lines "Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink." All these thoughts ended in sleep I had slept for about an hour on deck in the pleasant breeze when the deck steward woke me up and asked me "Do you intend to sleep on the deck, sir?" "Certainly not" said I indignantly at what I supposed to be the man's insolence, but soon discovered that some passengers were really sleeping on deck in order to get good breeze. Mr. A. was one among them· His bed was brought up by the deck steward. I preferred my cabin and went and slept there and soon forgot the moving waters, the moving world and the moving ship in the fairy lands of sleep,

The next morning I woke up early and took my bath and tea. When I was about to go on deck Mr. A. came with a woeful face and told me that one of his slippers was missing from the deck where he had kept it for the night· As Mr. L also missed one slipper and as no thief will steal a single slipper, we were all of opinion that some man who did not like the idea of Indians' sleeping on deck must have done the mischief. After an hour's search the two missing slippers were found thrown into the hold. Messrs. A and L never more slept on deck.

Some time after the missing slippers were recovered, an Englishman of the opposite cabin to

whom I casually spoke about the sour oranges told me that the oranges supplied to him with the morning tea were good. I told this to Mr. A. who was very furious Calling the cabin steward, he said to him angrily "Come here, you Tomato," [Mr. A always liked to refer to Antao as Tomato] "I shall kick you if you bring us any more sour oranges." The quality of the oranges thereafter improved till we got semi-sour and even insipid ones. I called these semi-sour ones "mule oranges" and the insipid ones "donkey oranges." I sometimes wondered whether we had improved our lot at all by the change.

After breakfast I went on deck. Then chancing to return to the cabin quite casually I found Antao tugging at my trunks. "What are you doing with my trunks, Antao?" I asked. "Cleaning-up, master. The captain visits the cabins at 11 A. M. and if he finds them unclean we are punished." said he. "I see" said I. "Master," said Antao rejoiced at finding a listener "The Captain has a search-light and can see right into the boxes without opening them." "Can he, really?" I asked incredulously. "He can, master" replied Antao. "and, what is more, he did yesterday." "Did he see into my pine-wood case?" I asked "Yes" replied the steward. "And what did he find there?" I asked. "How do I know?" replied Antao, "He never tells us." "I say, Antao," said I. "Is it a fact

that you people are not paid the same salary or given the same meals as the Europeans who do the same work ?" "Yes, master," said he. "Why do you put up with it ?" asked I "Same work, same wages, that ought to be the rule." "But it is not" replied Antao "And who will give us Goanese more pay than we get ?" I agreed that this last argument was unanswerable, and left for the deck again. Some ten minutes later, Mr. A and I again came into the cabin and found Antao swearing awfully and with a wry face picking out something from various parts of his body. "What is it, Antao ?" I asked. "Master, Mr. G. keeps ants in his bundle and they bit me, d-d creatures" replied the cabin steward. We laughed heartily at this and saw the abode of the ants in the shape of a parcel of sweet-meats kept in a corner of his berth by Mr. G. We certainly felt no sympathy for lazy Antao and thought that it served him right. That night, however, Mr. A changed his opinion. Ants have a way of climbing up and down, and the ants in Mr. G's bundle were not exceptions to the rule. Poor Mr. A was sleeping in the cabin on his lower berth after the bitter experience on deck over-night. At 1-20 A.M. I heard a great uproar, and, opening my eyes, found Mr. A on the warpath angrily demand-of Mr. G. why he had let loose his ants on him. I interfered and asked Mr A to adjourn the controversy till the morning Mr. A agreed on one

condition, namely, that the offending bundle and the ants should be placed in the cupboard for the night. I made Mr. G. agree to this and thus secured peace and sleep for the night. The next morning, the controversy was resumed. Mr. G's contention was that these were sweetmeats given to him by his mother and he could not help the ants entering the bundle. He made it clear that he never invited the ants and that Mr. A was welcome to deal with them as he liked. Mr. A's demand was that the bundle should be thrown into the sea without any more ceremony. Mr. G. was reluctant to do this. On opening the bundle, it was found that the ghee and oil used in the preparation had gone rancid and so I also advised Mr. G to throw the sweetmeats and the ants into the sea. This Mr. G. did at last and for his sacrifice was rewarded by peace. This day Mr. A felt thoroughly disgusted at my persistence in remaining a vegetarian and told me that I was offending against God since He has created the animals only for our food. "God created them for us and they are excellent food. Then, why not eat them?" he asked. I said in reply "God created children too, and cannibals consider them excellent food and created solely for their food especially if they happen to be one's neighbour's children. Will their argument be accepted by you?" "There is no analogy at all" declared Mr. A, horrified, "and there never was.

Man stands by himself. He is not an animal." "The evolution theory is against you" said I "It holds that man is only the noblest animal yet evolved." "Damn the evolution theory!" said Mr. A, "and I may tell you that you may continue to remain a vegetarian till the end of your life if that pleases you." "Thank you" said I "So the controversy is closed." "Yes" replied Mr. A "your evolution theory did it."

A few hours afterwards, Mr. M. came and requested me to accompany him to the ship's doctor as he was feeling some severe pains in the chest. I readily agreed, and both of us went to the first class saloon. and entered the doctor's room The doctor was a thin serious—looking man with a knowing look in his eyes. As soon as he saw Mr. M, he asked "Suffering from a weak chest, eh?" "Yes" said Mr. M. "How did you know?" I asked. "His pale bloodless face revealed it, let alone his coughing when coming here." "What should I do?" asked Mr. M. "Eat some eggs. Your diet is too poor" replied the doctor. "Doctor" said I "We are vegetarians and cannot eat eggs." "Must," said the doctor "if you want to live in a cold climate for some years. Your rice and dhal will be no good. Are you going to stay long in England?" "Yes, for at least three years" said I. "In that case you too will be forced to eat eggs." "I hope not" said I. "It is a religious conviction with me."

"Life is greater than religion," said the doctor. "I am determined not to take to eggs, come what may" said I. "You may depend upon it I shall not take to eggs." "Tell me this when you return after three years" said the doctor. "There is no use saying it now." Then he gave Mr M. a bottle of medicine and a bill for 2s. 6d. After I retired to my cabin I wondered whether I too would have to take to eggs. That afternoon we had for the first time training in the use of life belts. All of us were forced to go to the deck at the call of a bell and were shown the way of using the belts by the Captain, his lieutenants, some cabin stewards and some of the passengers who considered themselves experts. Those were days when the fear of hidden mines was supreme, and so particular care was taken to teach one and all on board the ship the use of the life belt. All remembered the story of the Lusitania and the Aquitania and wanted to escape a watery grave. Mr. S. put the life belt just like a garland round his neck instead of putting it under his arms as well. The disadvantage was, of course, that it would slip off as soon as he leant over and so would be of no use whatsoever in the case of an accident. The captain reviewed us all with our life belts on, and as he came to Mr. S. who was standing next to me, said "At this rate, my boy, you will never live to return to India and practise as a lawyer."

He then showed Mr. S. the correct way to put it on.

On the fourth day we began to see the Arabian coast distinctly. It was not much of a sight though. A barren coast with barren hills inland, it was as unattractive from the sea as the west coast of India is attractive. But with all that, it was the land of the Prophet and so I did not regard it with contempt. Here from these sandy deserts arose a cult and a culture which at one time threatened to overwhelm the world and which has lasted for thirteen centuries increasing the number of its adherents every successive century. I thought of Islam and its emphasis on the joys of life, and Hinduism and its emphasis on the sorrows of life. It was plain to me that the children of the desert, accustomed to a very hard life, found a luxurious life very attractive whereas the Hindus, satiated by luxury, were craving after more and more austerities. The nature of the two lands, I said to myself, has a great deal to do with the difference between the two philosophies. I was disturbed in these reflections by a shout "A whale! a whale!" As I had not seen as yet this King of the Deep, I rushed to the spot indicated and saw a jet of water going up. "That is the whale" said a friendly passenger to me. Soon the monster rose and we had a good view of it. The Captain directed his glasses towards it though I couldn't make out why

he did so, seeing that the animal itself was so huge that it required no magnifying glasses. It was only 2 furlongs from the ship. The whale followed us for about a mile and then disappeared.

Thus days dragged on till on the seventh morning the ship arrived at Aden and we were allowed to go on shore on condition that we returned within six hours. A barren peak devoid of all vegetation, a true representative of Arabia, was staring at us forbiddingly. But a large number of Arabs and Negroes were boisterous with joy at seeing the ship anchor. "So many sheep to be fleeced" must have been their thought. Taxis and hackney carriages were available on the shore. All was bustle on board the ship. Everybody was getting ready to land. After the monotony of the sea for six days, land had a charm, aye, even the land of Arabia. We were also anxious to land. A friend from the next cabin told me that thieves were numerous at Aden. So I locked every one of my trunks and boxes and finally locked the rail-bag also lest perchance somebody should come and steal its contents. When I had just finished locking it, the painful thought occurred to me that the thief who wanted to steal the contents of the rail-bag, when unlocked, might carry away the rail-bag itself even though locked. "Something must be left to Providence" said I, tired of these petty worries. I told my difficulties to Mr. A, who exclaimed.

"Thank God, my long case is in the hold! It is safe from theft." So, even the evil thing had its silver linings. In five minutes we had locked the cabin and got into the country boat. A quarter of an hour more, and we had set our feet on the land of the Prophet.

CHAPTER IV.

ADEN TO MARSEILLES.

WE separated into batches of twos and threes for the purpose of sight-seeing. Myself and Mr. S. formed a group. We hired a hackney carriage whose driver had begun with a demand for fifteen rupees but had finally been only too glad to accept five. The understanding was that he should show us round the whole of Aden. First he took us to the European quarter of the city which was, as usual, spruce and neat. Then he took us to the bazaar which was evil-smelling, crowded and full of flies. We went past the bazaar to the parade ground where some Sikh soldiers were patrolling. It cheered our hearts to see these countrymen of ours. One of the soldiers wanted to talk to us in Hindustani; but, as the utmost Hindustani either of us knew was but to say that we did not know any Hindustani, the conversation ended abruptly. The hackney carriage man was a cunning Arab and wanted to cheat us by telling us that we had seen the whole of the town. Unfortunately for him, I

had heard of the famous tanks of Aden and so asked him to take us there. "They are far inland, master" he said, but a policeman, whom we questioned on the subject, told us that they were within three miles, and so we forced the hackney carriage man to take us there. On the way we saw the Arab city which was neater than the bazaar but still far from attractive The houses had no proper light or ventilation; and the faces of the inmates were none too pleasant to behold. In the bazaar everybody seemed to be pleased to see us, but here we saw the scowling faces of the Arabs All their women were veiled heavily, a most curious sight for a person like me from the veil-free west coast. At last, we reached the famous tanks scooped out of the hills. They were very imposing to see, and spoke volumes about the industry, ability and wealth of the ruler who made them. To my mind, he appeared to have had far more goodness in him than wisdom, for the tanks were bone-dry when we saw them then, and such rain as Aden was likely to have would not suffice even to satisfy the thirst of the rocky beds. But on my return journey I found these very tanks three-fourths full and revised my opinion about their constructor's wisdom. For, water in Aden is a precious commodity and is sold in the bazaar at an anna per pail. This water at the time we went was distilled from sea-water but on my return journey there was the tank water

selling at three pies per pail side by side with the distilled water. To the poor Adenite this must have been a boon, and he must have blessed the constructor of the tanks every time he drank their water which he would either buy from the street purveyors at concession rates or get himself from the tanks on a camel's back. There are few trees in Aden, and even those few which exist are stunted. So the only real shades are those cast by buildings and also the under parts of culverts. We found about sixty camels lying under a culvert and enjoying themselves. I was very much surprised at seeing so many of these uncouth creatures together. When I expressed my surprise, the coachman said "What wonder is there in this? The camels are our cows and bullocks." This reply of the Arab was just and to the point. I had been so much accustomed to regard camels as rare animals to be found in zoos that I had forgotten that in Aden they were mere beasts of burden. At a certain corner in the Arab quarters a disreputable-looking man was selling a yellow liquid which we were told was camel's milk. Of course, we never felt tempted to drink the potion though our coachman was reciting a regular epic in its praise. We saw Aden through and through and were much amused at the two main races to be found even in this small town. The one was the tall, graceful, proud, serious-looking, brown Arab,

and the other was the black, woolly-haired, ever-merry Somali. I talked to one Somali who knew a bit of English. "Where do you come from?" I asked. "From Djibouty my father came and in Aden I was born" he replied. "What was your father?" I asked. "He was servant in Arab family as I is," was the reply. We were agreeably surprised to find some Parsi shops in Aden. For, though Aden is politically a part of the Bombay presidency and therefore of India, I had always regarded it as a bit of Arabia. We took some tea and then returned to the wharf. There we paid the hackney-carriage man off and took a boat and reached the ship.

There was still an hour for the ship to sail. I went into the cabin and found my things safe. Then I went on deck and watched the brisk trade which was going on. Arabs in country craft were exhibiting furs and other fancy articles. They were not allowed to come up, and so the articles were, as usual, drawn up in baskets tied to ropes and lowered in the same fashion if not wanted. Money too was transmitted in the same way. Sometimes, the ship sails before either the money or the article is delivered to the other party. Such cheatings are far more numerous on the part of the Arabs. So much so, all passengers are warned by the stewards and others not to part with their money till the article is secure in their hands.

The ship set sail at 3 P.M. The next day we were in the Red Sea. The heat became terrible, and even on deck there was no breeze. The deserts on both sides radiated heat The scenery also was most depressing except at sunrise and sunset. The sunset on the Red Sea is specially impressive. The blood-red colour of the sun and the sudden drop below the horizon are unforgettable. Such a glorious sunset I have never seen except at Cape Comorin. But the sunrise and sunset are about all that can be called attractive in the Red Sea.

After a few tiresome days the steamer reached Suez at the head of the Suez Canal at about 5 A.M. All of us passengers had been asked to assemble in the dining hall so that the doctor might examine us in order to satisfy himself that we were not carrying any diseases to Europe; for, Europe begins with the west of Suez. To the east of Suez lies the vast Orient. So this petty little place is the traditional boundary between the East and the West. The Sun Life Assurance Company people had given me a form to be filled up as soon as I reached Suez and to be posted to them noting therein the date and hour of the ship's arrival at that place. This was, of course, to calculate the rebate due to me, for all insurance companies consider the climate of the countries to the west of Suez to be far less dangerous to life than that

of India and reduce the premium for the period of stay in those countries Myself and Mr. G. were the only persons who went to the dining room that morning dressed. All the others, including the ladies, were in their sleeping garments and dressing gowns. The doctor never examined anybody. He merely read out the names and, finding all present, went away thanking us and permitting us to disperse. Perhaps his idea was that anybody who was healthy enough to be present in the dining hall at 5 A.M. after a voyage of ten days might be safely presumed to be no carrier of disease.

We were not allowed to land at Suez, and, indeed, there was nothing attractive there. Soon the ship entered the famous Suez Canal. Being a Mail steamer, it was given preference over other ships which had arrived slightly earlier. The Canal is a marvel of engineering skill considering the time when it was constructed. Now that the even more wonderful Panama Canal has been constructed, the magic of the Suez Canal scarcely appeals to people. But had we lived in Lesseps' days and listened to the innumerable objections raised to the opening of the Canal, all of which objections have now been proved to be extremely silly, we would have understood the courage and faith which Ferdinand De Lesseps had. At the other end of the Canal stands the statue of this

indomitable man who carried out the dream of ages and marked an epoch in engineering. The statue is fully expressive of the man ; his unshakeable resolution, inexhaustible faith and supreme self-confidence are all faithfully portrayed. Mr. Griffiths saw me looking fixedly at this statue and asked me what there was in it to deserve such close scrutiny. I replied " That man made history by this work of his and linked up three continents in closer embrace."

We saw the sections of the Canal where Turks and Britishers faced one another in the late war. The sinister-looking Mount Sinai was glaring at us from a distance. Both the banks of the Canal are sandy wastes useless for all cultivation. At last, the ship reached Port Said and cast anchor. We again went on shore. This time also Mr. S. and I went together sight-seeing.

Port Said is pre-eminently a cosmopolitan city. All the nations of the world are there. The principal nations have their separate quarters also, *e. g.* the French quarter, the Italian quarter and the Greek quarter. Egyptians, Nubians, Indians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hollanders, Portuguese, all jostle one another in its crowded streets. In one sense Port Said is not a city. It is a mere caravanserai. Its population changes every day almost, old people going away and new ones coming in It is a

creation of the Suez Canal, solely depends on it for its existence, and will disappear if the canal is abandoned.

In Port Said, while roaming about, we found a Madrasi shop, the worthy proprietor having the typical name of Ramaswami. Kachchi and Sindhi shops there were innumerable as in Aden, Gibraltar and other places, the principal trade of these people being in curios and fancy goods.

We returned to the ship, and it soon set sail again. In a few hours we were on the Mediterranean. A perceptible change took place. The climate became suddenly chill, and it was no longer possible to venture on deck after nightfall without an overcoat. I was forced to put on my ridiculous overcoat, which was hardly longer than an ordinary coat and was made of the coarsest stuff imaginable; compared with other people's overcoats, it looked so ridiculous and excited so many adverse comments and attracted so many eyes that I resolved not to use it despite the cold except when it was completely dark and nobody could see it. An Italian had come on board from Port Said, and he and I used to sit together on deck in the evenings and talk about India and Italy.

The ship was to have gone straight across the Mediterranean to Marseilles, but news received about a hidden German mine on the straight route made her deflect her course and go between Sicily

and the toe of Italy. I saw the coast of Sicily and thought of Syracuse and Carthage. As the night came on, the ship crossed the Straits of Messina. It was a beautiful spectacle. The two towns of Reggio and Messina on opposite coasts were brilliantly lighted and presented a festive appearance. The rows of lights reminded me of the Karthigai lights in South India. An hour later, we saw the famous volcano Stromboli in eruption. It was a most impressive sight to us who had never seen an active volcano. Jets of steam and living fire were being thrown up every five minutes. Two days later, the ship passed between Corsica and Sardinia. The coasts of both these islands were plainly visible from the deck. I gazed at Corsica intently. The land which gave birth to Napoleon must always remain an object of intense interest to all. Even to see it from a distance was a great pleasure to me It is indeed wonderful that this petty island should have produced a man who was a terror to Europe for twenty-two years, who conquered Egypt, and who had designs even on far-off India.

The longest journey must end at last. The *Nellore* reached Marseilles on the 12th October at about 11 A.M. Notice had been given that the passengers could land at 12 noon and that the special train from Marseilles would start at 7 P.M. A lunch was offered for those who would register

their names. Myself and Mr. A, were too eager to land to care to register our names. I landed at 12 noon with all my belongings. Mr. A's long case was in the hold, and we had to wait for it for about an hour. Mr. A was anxious that we should venture together into Marseilles. So I waited. By the time we got Mr. A's case we felt hungry. We enquired of the steward whether we could get lunch on board the ship. He said that we could not since we had not registered our names. So we had no other go but to venture into the town in quest of food. After the customs examination of our goods was over, we left our things in charge of one of Cook's men and plunged into the City of Marseilles.

CHAPTER V.

MARSEILLES TO LONDON.

WE set out with a light heart, never dreaming that we would meet with any difficulty. Our plan was first to go to some restaurant and satisfy our hunger, then to go to the Marseilles branch of Thomas Cook's office for cashing a draft of Mr. A and for taking delivery of any letters which might have arrived for him and then to go round the great city sight-seeing.

In the first flush of enthusiasm on entering a European City for the first time, we walked on for about two furlongs crossing one or two roads and not noting particularly the route we had taken. Then we saw a bus coming, hailed it, and, when it stopped, got into it and sat down very comfortably alongside a number of Frenchmen and women who stared at us with smiling good-humoured eyes and faces. The bus rattled along and had gone about half a mile before the unbusiness-like conductor, who was in his own leisurely way issuing tickets to passengers, came to us. He asked us "*ou allez-vous, messieurs?*" (Where do you go to, sirs?).

I knew no French; even less did Mr. A. I replied in English " We want to go to a restaurant first. Please give us two tickets for the nearest restaurant. The conductor laughed and said " *Je ne parle pas anglais*" (I do not speak English). Then, finding that we had not understood him, he said with an effort " English no." We were astounded. We had thought that there was no corner of the world where English was not understood, and, here, in the very next country to England, the conductor of a bus did not know English. We were also in an awkward predicament. How were we to make the conductor understand what we wanted? Eagerly we searched the bus for an Englishman, but to no avail. There was not even a single English-knowing person except ourselves. Many a genial Frenchman and woman tried to help us, but all in vain. They knew not a word of English and we knew not a word of French; hence they could not be of any use to us. It must be remembered that even the words common to both the languages are pronounced differently in each language and so cannot be understood by the speakers of the other. Our surprise and embarassment knew no bounds. In what a fool's paradise had we lived, we thought to ourselves. We had not learnt then that on the continent of Europe a man could get on more easily with French than with English. Nor would

such knowledge have comforted us much. Several kind souls plied us with questions in the rapid dialect of the south of France, but we understood not a word A certain elderly gentleman who wore the well-known uniform of a Roman Catholic priest stroked his flowing beard and asked us a question in Latin expecting that here at last was the master key. But, alas, I knew nothing of Latin except to recognise it as Latin when spoken or written; and Mr. A, though a lawyer and as such presumed to know at least dog-Latin, was so innocent of that knowledge that he mistook the Latin for another dialect of French. He told me later that he was under the impression that the priest spoke dignified French as opposed to the colloquial French of the rest in much the same way as a Brahmin priest in the United Provinces would use dignified Hindi, fortified with a plethora of Sanskrit words, unlike the colloquial Hindi of the vulgar folk. Be that as it may, I was highly amused when Mr. A, thinking that he as an elderly man was the proper person to reply to the venerable priest, said "Sir, I am sorry I do not know French." None except myself understood the humour of the situation as the others did not understand what Mr. A said

There was silence for some time The priest and the others resumed their seats and gave us up as hopeless. I thought of a working plan. I touched

the ticket bundle of the conductor, showed the number two by holding up two of my fingers and said " Terminus." My idea was to take the tickets for the terminus to be on the safe side and to get down as soon as we saw any restaurants. I asked Mr. A to keep a sharp look-out for restaurants. The conductor understood the word " terminus " and gave us two tickets. Thus our first problem was solved in truly Indian fashion. Mr A was deputed to watch one side of the street and I watched the other side. In ten minutes we reached the heart of the city and got down. We saw what appeared to be a restaurant and went in. Some people were drinking wine there. They looked up as we entered, and there was a good-humoured grin on their faces. A waiter came and asked us "*Que Voulez-vous, messieurs?*" (What do you want, sirs?) By this time I had found out that the best method of making ourselves understood was by using signs used by the deaf and dumb. So I touched my lips with all the fingers of my right hand This universal language of humanity was readily understood. The waiter repeated my sign and then shook his head to signify 'No.' Then he said "*Cabaret, pas restaurant*" (A tavern, not a restaurant) and brought a glass to impress on us his meaning. I was choking with merriment at the use of these deaf and dumb signs between two civilised people in a country in Western Europe

and wondered what a certain professor of mine who had asserted that there was no place on earth where English was not understood would have said had he been present then. Most probably, he would have thereafter taken a vow of silence and perhaps become wiser thereby though not as wise as the *Munis** of old. My merriment was not quite unalloyed as my stomach was crying for food and I could not find out how I would ever be able to tell any French waiter that I was a pure vegetarian and get vegetarian dishes. In any case, it was quite useless to stay in that cabaret; so we went out into the street. A few yards further we found an old woman selling small loaves (*petits pains*) and oranges. We bought some of these loaves and ate them greedily. We ordered for two citronnades and sipped the whole quantity through the reeds. Our hunger and thirst were satisfied. I bought ten oranges for a franc and ate two. I gave two to Mr. A and put the remaining six into my coat pockets which bulged out prominently. Then both of us set out in excellent humour in search of Cook's branch.

The problem was to find somebody who could understand what we wanted and give us the directions for reaching Cook's Office. After our experience in the bus we were not very hopeful of getting this information from Frenchmen. So we

* Sages. Literally, silent men.

were on the look-out for some Englishman. But we were in no desperate hurry. We sauntered along looking at the shops on either side and admiring the shop windows Quite a lot of people were about, and all had that gay appearance natural to the children of Southern France and Italy. We saw some Algerians and Tunisians, but Mr. A could not make himself understood by them in spite of his boast that Arabic was understood by all Muslims and that he was an expert in Arabic. Either the Algerians and Tunisians knew no Arabic, or Mr. A's Arabic knowledge was not so extensive. His fellow-Muslims gazed at Mr. A wonderingly. Mr. A told me after they had gone that they must have been Frenchified Muslims and that he was sure that at least the Moroccans and Egyptians would understand his Arabic perfectly. Presently we came across a body of Moroccan soldiers strolling about The indefatigable Mr. A approached them and after an exchange of profound salaams tried to open a conversation in flawless Arabic but the result was no better than with the Algerians and Tunisians. However, this attempt of Mr. A led to an amusing incident. The French after the War were terribly afraid of German spies who were supposed to be tampering with the loyalty of French Colonial levies and especially with the Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians. Of these they were most careful about

the Moroccans as they were nominally subjects of an independent Sultan, were turbulent by nature, and were supposed to be more excitable than the Algerians and Tunisians who had been under French rule or protection for a far longer time. Evidently Mr..A's attempts at friendly conversation with his fellow-Muslims roused the suspicions of some passers-by and policemen, for hardly had we gone a hundred yards from the Moroccans than two policemen swooped down on us from a neighbouring cabaret and asked "*Papier*! *Papier*!" We did not understand what they wanted and simply stared at them. Without any more ceremony they put their hands in our pockets and began a search. I was apprehensive about my oranges and so said " These are oranges which I bought. Why do you want to take them ? " On the policemen, who understood not a word of English, this protest as well as the insinuation fell flat. Finding that a crowd was gathering, the policemen hastily finished the search of our pockets. Fortunately for us, our passports were in our inner pockets. As soon as the constables saw these, their whole attitude changed. " *Voila* ! " (There !) said one to the other, holding up my passport. The other got Mr. A's passport also at once, I was afraid lest these constables should take my passport in addition to my oranges. I said " That is my passport. Give it to me." The constables looked at our photoes

in the passports and at us. Then they scrutinized the French visas. They became frankly apologetic. "*Sujets Britannique*" (British Subjects) they said to one another. Then turning to us they said "*Excusez-nous, messieurs, Nous n'etaient pas avis de vos nationalite. Acceptez nos apologies sincere.*" (Excuse us, sirs. We were not aware of your nationality. Accept our sincere apologies), restored all our things including my oranges and let us go. We understood the drift of their remarks, and I said to Mr. A "You see what a good thing it was that these fellows saw our passports Else, we might have been put to untold trouble." "Perhaps by asking for our '*Papiers*' they wanted only our passports" said Mr. A. "I too think so" said I, "Now, let us go to Cook's." We went on again merrily along the streets of Marseilles. Opposite a big shop we found a large crowd gathered staring at the many beautiful articles exhibited artistically at the window. There was an English Tommy in that crowd. We went and stood near him. "Damned nice, isn"t it. ?" said he to us. "Yes" said I "Will you please tell us where Cook's is." "Rather!" said he "It is close by. I shall myself take you there." and he started. I wondered how the very soldier whom we would have dreaded to approach in India was so readily helping us. The soldier was glad to know that we were Indians, told us quite gratuitously that the

War had made the white, brown, and black equal, adding with an odd naivete "You ought to see them Blacks on the Rhine; regular lording over the Germans. It would have been impossible seven years ago." We agreed. Soon, Cook's was in sight and we left our soldier friend thanking him profusely. "Ugh!" said he on leaving us "These here Frenchmen will never improve. Even after the War they don't know any English, not they. But once you learn to speak their funny language, they are not half bad, you know." Mr. A was brisk with his business at Cook's. He presented his draft and got payment Then he enquired for his letters. After a prolonged search he was given a solitary open cover containing printed matter from Messrs. Grindlay and Co., who assured him of their prompt services should he book passages through them and of their readiness to bank his money at all times. Poor Mr. A went red with rage at this printed callousness Where he had expected numerous letters from friends and would-be buyers of Sialkot sporting materials, here was this officious company giving him his solitary welcome. It was as if a man expecting a cheque finds a bill instead! Mr. A was sick of Cook's and we resolved at once to leave this cffice of many regrets and go round the gay city. After three hours' roaming about and sight-seeing we got into a tea-shop and had a very fine tea with plenty of

excellent cakes. The ship's tea was worthless in comparison with this gorgeous affair; and we felt not the slightest regret in paying five francs for us both. The rate of exchange was then favourable to us.

After the tea, we proceeded to return to the docks and our luggage. Here a difficulty arose. How were we to name the place we wanted to get to? There were many extensive docks at Marseilles, and how were we to name our particular dock? Above all, how were we to find out the number of the bus going to the docks? While we were pondering over these problems, who should come along but the soldier who had directed us to Cook's? He asked us whether we had finished our business at Cook's and had seen the town. We replied in the affirmative and then explained our new difficulties. He laughed and said "I think I can help you." He led us to another road and then took us to a policeman. He asked the policeman to put us into the bus which went to the harbour and then gave us a chit with "Hangar 7" written on it which slip he asked us to show to the conductor. We thanked him and he went away after shaking hands with us vigorously and hoping to see us again. "Not here, I hope" said I, and we laughed. The French policeman perhaps thought from our laughter that we were a humorous lot and so said something in French and laughed.

Most probably, it was a witticism from his way of saying it and his subsequent behaviour but as we knew no French we could not appreciate its humour and so did not laugh. The laughter of the policeman died away suddenly and he must have mentally registered us in the same class with Scotchmen. However, his private discomfiture did not swerve him from the path of duty, and he showed us the right bus for the harbour though I had feared that the man out of revenge or pure devilry might put us into a wrong bus. We showed the chit to the conductor and he readily issued us tickets for 'Hangar 7' which we reached quite easily. As soon as we got down, we went to the place where our luggage was stored and found it safe to our inexpressible satisfaction.

It was only five in the evening when we returned, and the special train was to leave at 7 P.M. We got our things weighed and I had to pay 40 francs more as luggage fare. After the weighing was over, we took a gorgeous fruitarian meal and prepared ourselves for getting into the train. At 7-45 P M. the train started. Myself and Mr. G were given the same compartment. I got the lower berth and Mr. G the upper. The berths were quite comfortable though the fare (£ 6-10-0) was, to say the least, exorbitant. Mr. M, the pearl merchant, had stayed behind at Marseilles with intent to go by the morning train to Paris at 1/3

the fare charged for this train. The night was cold, and I wrapped myself in my rugs and was soon asleep. The train's motion was very agreeable and conduced to bring about sleep earlier. When I woke up late in the morning we were in Paris. All were taking their tea. I also took some tea and joined Mr. A and others who were talking in the corridor. "The train is three hours late" remarked somebody. "So oriental punctuality is not confined to the orient." said I. "Then why did you come at all to Europe?" asked the drunken Englishman with whom I had had a verbal duel on board the ship. "I did not come at your behest" said I. "What did you say?" asked he in a threatening voice and advanced a step towards me. "Don't think that you can cow me by threats here" said I. "This is not India; it is France, the land of liberty, equality and fraternity. You can't get any unfair advantage here as in India. The same judge and jury will try us if it comes to blows." The other muttered an oath and withdrew his step. My reference was, of course, to the racial distinction in India in judicial trials in those days. Mr Griffiths came to me shortly afterwards and said "Why do you say that in France alone you will get justice? England will not lag behind France any day." His remark was perfectly justified by what I saw of the trials in England which were scrupulously fair whoever the parties might be.

Snow had fallen over-night, the winter having set in early that year. The train left Paris and soon crossed the Aisne on whose banks had been fought one of the most murderous battles in the Great War. Before I ceased thinking about the battle of the Aisne, the train had rushed past Beauvais and had arrived at Amiens. There was some ice lying at the end of the platform, and Mr. Griffiths pointed it out to me. It was the first time I saw natural ice and so I got down from the train and took a piece in my hands. The thing was so cold that I dropped it almost instantly and came back to the compartment. Mr. A was wonder-struck and asked me why I felt so curious. "Is this the first time you see ice?" he asked. 'It is.' I replied. The sight of the Aisne and Amiens, which had also figured largely in the war, made me resolve to visit the battle-fields in the near future, a resolve carried into effect in July 1920. The train passed Abbeville and reached Boulogne at about 4-30 P.M. We were informed there that owing to the lateness of the hour and the roughness of the channel the crossing would be done only the next day and that the mail boat would start from Boulogne at 8 A.M., the next morning. We were therefore asked to get down at Boulogne and make ourselves comfortable for the night in either of the two hotels there. So we got down with all our belongings and went to the bigger of the two hotels.

Myself, Mr G and Mr. S got one room. Aftet taking six little loaves and a litre of milk, I went to bed and fell fast asleep.

I woke up at 6 A.M. the next day and took a good breakfast on loaves, butter, fruits and coffee. Then taking all my things I went to the beach where in 1803 Napoleon had camped with his army for his projected invasion of England. One by one, all the other passengers came toiling along. None of us were cheerful. We were slightly put out at the unexpected delay of one day. After the inevitable customs examination and checking of passports and visas were over. we got into the boat and started for Dover. Generally, boats from Boulogne go to Folkestone, but that day owing to a combination of untoward circumstances the boat cut across the channel to Dover. It was a cold day and the channel was rough. I had a poor opinion of the English Channel and expected to see a thing as placid and calm as a lagoon. I was somewhat taken aback at seeing the stormy waters, and realised that, after all, the Armada had some little justification for its grotesque failure. I strained my eyes to catch a glimpse of the opposite English coast, but owing to a mist could not see it. The crossing took three hours and I was somewhat amused at the anxiety of some passengers on seeing the channel a bit stormy. Finally, the cliffs of Dover came in sight, and I remembered the famous

scene in King Lear. They are really impressive, but that is because they are chalk cliffs and not because of their height. Dover reminded me of the days of the cinque ports. Soon, the Customs House was in sight. We disembarked and went through the awful routine of passport checking and Customs examination. The English Customs Officers were more thorough in their examination than the French. We were all asked to take our things to a long room and place them on benches. The customs officers would go round inspecting and marking with a piece of chalk the articles examined. Everybody was anxious to get his examination done first, and I was no exception to the rule. My articles were soon transported to one of the benches. They consisted of two suit cases, one giant pine-wood case, a rail bag and a few sundries. A Customs Officer came and asked me what my suit cases and pinewood box contained. I said " Books and clothes ". " Open everything " said he. I opened the two suit cases and the rail bag and exposed their contents. He smiled at the wonderful articles of dress given to me by the Bombay supplier. The bundled-up ladies' dressing gown he took in his hand and perused with a mystified expression in his eyes. Then he asked me to open the pine-wood case. I told him that it would be very difficult as the lid had been securely nailed in on all sides. " But it must

be opened somehow" said he and asked one peon to go to work at the nails with a hammer. "What will happen if you break the lid open?" I asked "It will be impossible for me to carry it afterwards." "What to do?" said the Customs Officer, and then, seeing my face fall, he said "Don't fear. We shall nail in the lid after examination, as a special case." But there was no need for this generosity. At the first blow of the hammer a chip of the good old pinewood case flew off. There was no sign of any of of the four-inch nails coming off. The Customs Officer and his peon were frightened. More and more passengers were coming with their luggage. "You may take all your luggage and go" said the Customs Officer "I dare say that box contains only books as you say. It is a wonder it stood the journey to England. Is it old?" "Very" said I, and departed with two porters carrying all my belongings. Dear old pinewood box, it had a very long life. Bought in Trivandrum in 1912 A.D. for fourteen annas as a second hand box, it went to England carrying my books in 1919, and, after various journeys to the south coast health resorts, France, Belgium and Germany, returned with me to Bombay in December 1922 and was left with my brother as a trustworthy vagabond and is still doing yeoman service as a lumber box. It was nothing flashy, this box, but has been doing unostentatious work of

the greatest utility for the last 14 years. Some who have seen it attribute its fidelity and endurance to the quality of the pinewood, and some to the tin plates inside, but I attribute it to a combination of both these.

I boarded the train for London. I saw some curious warnings not to put heavy articles on the racks but nevertheless put my two suit cases there with the hearty co-operation of the two English porters. The pinewood case was about to be taken into the compartment when the guard came along and said " That there big case should not be put into the compartment. It should be put into the luggage van. " He tried to lift the thing, but the good old case had no ears or brims to catch and was none too light. Naturally, it did not even rise up two inches and look at him. "My !" said the guard dropping the thing and taking care that it did not fall on his toe. "It is a real heavy weight. Whatever does it contain? Bullion?" "No fear" said I. "Books." "Going to some Varsity, I suppose," said the guard, "but what a load of books, though !"

I asked the two porters to carry the pinewood case to the luggage van. They deposited it neatly on a new trunk of some person with brilliant varnish on it. As the pine wood case sat on the trunk, the latter groaned and its heart seemed to break. The owner of the

trunk shrieked out "I say, don't put that big case on my new trunk. The varnish may go, and the trunk may even break." He rushed into the van and tried to dislodge my pet; but it was too heavy for him, and so he called in the help of my two porters, and all three of them together put the pinewood case down, rescued the trunk, which escaped with a few discolorations, and reversed the positions of the pinewood case and the trunk. A few minutes afterwards, the train started. I feasted my eyes on the English country scenery. We passed Canterbury, Rochester, and other old and historic towns. An hour later we had reached our destination. The train stopped, crowds of porters boarded it, shouts of "Victoria" "Victoria" were heard, and a fleet of taxis, cabs and lorries met our eyes when we looked out of the windows. We were in the heart of London.

CHAPTER VI.

21 CROMWELL ROAD.

THERE was a frantic eagerness on all sides to get down from the train as early as possible and be off. The men and women who had so patiently waited for 19 long days suddenly became unreasonably impatient of a few more minutes' delay. On the ocean there was no use fretting, and so all had kept quiet. But now that they were in the heart of London, within sight of their homes, so to speak, all patience gave way and minutes became almost as important as days. The porters who invaded all the compartments rose to the occasion and were with truly wonderful rapidity unloading trunks, suit cases and other luggage. Often, in their zeal to be expeditious, they used to unload and carry away other people's luggage mistaking them for their clients' and make the hapless owners run after them leaving their other luggage behind. For, if they delayed the pursuit those articles of theirs would have gone miles in some taxi or trolly.

We Indians had no homes or friends or relations in England; but that did not make me or any

other Indian more patient. We saw no reason to stay a minute longer in the train than the rest. We were anxious to plunge into the new world in which we were to spend at least three years. The eagerness to see our new surroundings acted on us in much the same way as the desire to see old haunts and old friends operated on our English fellow-passengers. We got down from the train with all our luggage. It took me some little time to get my pinewood case which had to be extricated from a lot of other articles. A porter carelessly put it down on the platform, incidentally crushing his left big toe on which a corner of the wretched box squatted. With a shriek, he dislodged it from his toe and said to me "Why ever do you gents carry such boxes about with you? Coming from India—r I suppose? Them boxes are never seen in this country with passengers. Them are book-shop boxes." "That box too contains only books." said I. Then the porter hailed a taxi. Myself and Mr. S resolved to go together in it. There was some trouble in getting all our things into it, especially the pine-wood case. The taxi-cab man demurred to taking so much and so heavy luggage and suggesed that at least the pine-wood case might well be entrusted to a carrier who would deliver it at any address I wanted for a low fee. But I had little faith in carriers I always like to have all my luggage with me An extra shilling

offered made the taxi-man cast off his scruples. All our luggage, Mr. S. had little, was soon beautifully loaded in the taxi which groaned under its weight and assumed a new shape with many more angles than before. While this was going on, I was busy looking round for Dr. Arnold or at least one of his lieutenants from 21 Cromwell Road. By reading the hand-book issued by the Advisory Committee, I had been led to expect that either Dr. Arnold or one of his lieutenants would come to the station for every mail train in order to meet new Indian arrivals. My friends also had expected this. But we were disappointed. No one had come from 21 Cromwell Road So we were left to shift for ourselves. Fortunately, our taxi-man knew where 21 Cromwell Road was. Myself and Mr. S. got into the taxi and drove off after paying the porter half a crown. There was a metre for the taxi, but that did not help us materially as the taxi-man took a very devious route and made us pay twelve shillings where we ought to have paid only six. But since we were two and thus had to pay only six shillings apiece and since we saw a good bit of London on the way, we did not grudge the payment. The taxi stopped before a large building opposite the South Kensington Museum. The driver said "Here you are, sirs." We got down and went to the door and knocked. A short fat man opened the door and stood rubbing

his hands. He, I gathered later, was the head porter. An elderly lady with a very good-humoured face and grey hair stepped forward and shook hands with us hoping that we had a good voyage and welcoming us to 21 Cromwell Road. That was Miss Beck, the lady in charge of the place. After Miss Beck had shaken hands with us, a comparatively young man shook hands with us and repeated her kind enquiries. That was Mr. Gordon George, the warden of the hostel To us, Indians, the cordial welcome extended by these two and their kind enquiries looked a little artificial and mechanical, but were all the same welcome. Soon, Messrs. G, A, B and L arrived, and Miss Beck and Mr. Gordon George turned their attention to them. We made the porters take our things from the taxi into the building Then we paid the taxi-man twelve shillings and asked him to go away. " Where is my tip ? " asked he. " Are not twelve shillings enough for you ? " I asked. " The metre gave me that." replied he, " Don't you want to give me something extra ? ". As there were several persons about, I paid the man an extra shilling and sent him away Turning to Mr. S, I said " These taxi-men are no better than our rikshawalas in the matter of extorting backsheesh . Only, they call it a tip." Mr. S agreed, and, with a mournful air, gave me the six shillings and six pence he owed me. We asked the porter where

Dr. Arnold was. He told us that he was at the India Office. We had thought that Dr. Arnold was in charge of 21 Cromwell Road. Indeed, so deep-rooted was this belief with the Indians going to England in those days that one Indian is said to have made the absurd mistake of taking the head porter to be Dr. Arnold, Miss Beck to be Mrs. Arnold and Mr. Gordon George to be their son! The ludicrous fellow, it seems, even went to shake hands with the porter, neglecting Miss Beck and Mr. Gordon George, and was saved from making a worse ass of himself only by the porter's awkward but wise retreat!

We were told by Miss Beck that there was no room available for us but that we could put up in a hall upstairs along with several others. We were shown this hall which was next to the reading room and contained nine beds. There was a side verandah with three beds adjoining this hall. "You see, we are full up at present" said Miss Beck to us "I am sorry I cannot offer you better accommodation now." "That is all right" said I "Please don't worry." I was given a bed in the big hall. After this, I went downstairs to look after my things I was told by the porter that only the absolutely essential things were to be taken upstairs, the rest remaining in his safe custody in the luggage room below. I was not very much in favour of leaving my things in a

place which could not be reached by my eye always, but the idea of leaving them in the hall where several people were coming and going constantly as in a caravanserai was even more intolerable. And, as so often happens in this world, I had to choose the lesser of the two evils and leave the bulk of my luggage downstairs. In order to mitigate the evil, I used to inspect my suit-cases and pinewood box at least once a day and incidentally found that the same healthy habit was indulged in by others also. When I mentioned this to a friend, who was a bit of a cynic, he remarked "It is not those who have left things there that haunt the place so frequently, it is those who have not." "What interest have they?" I asked in my innocence. "Just to see if any things have been left for them" was his smiling reply. My anxiety was increased twofold. "How to escape this evil?" I asked. "Travel with no luggage" he replied. "That is impossible" said I. "Well, then, if you want the luxury of having much luggage you must take the ordinary risks." A poor consolation this, and I did not thank my friend for it. Nevertheless, I made my visits to the luggage room more frequent.

The charge for lodging and breakfast was £1 11sh. 6d. per week. If a lunch were wanted, a ticket for one shilling had to be bought. For dinner, tickets were sold at 1sh. 3d. each

Special arrangements had to be made if tea were wanted.

That night, Miss Beck sat at the same table as myself, Mr. G and Mr. A for dinner. First, soup was brought. I said that I did not want it and began to eat a piece of bread and some peas and boiled potatoes. Miss Beck took a spoonful of soup and, sipping it, said "It is very good. Why don't you take it, Mr. Ayyar?" "Because I am a vegetarian and don't eat any meat" said I. "It contains no meat" said she. "Do you mean to say that it contains no meat substance whatsoever?" asked I. "Well, hardly anything" said she "That is enough for me. I won't touch it" I replied. "You must get used to it if you are to live for three years in England" said Miss Beck resuming her soup-drinking. "I am confident of getting on without it" I replied, and ate my peas and potatoes. At 21 Cromwell Road, it is a settled conviction that no man can get on in England without eating meat, and a regular propaganda is carried on for converting vegetarians to meat-eating with the best of motives. One of my friends was made by his table-mates to eat a soup on the assurance that there was no meat product at all in it but only ginger. Poor man, he ate the soup and incidentally found while eating the so-called ginger pieces that they were really minced meat. But the object of the proselytisers failed. For, the

man, indignant at the fraud, left Cromwell Road for good and lived a strict vegetarian life from whose even equanimity he would be disturbed only by the mention of 21 Cromwell Road. To this day, he believes that his table-mates, who were all Indians, wanted simply to degrade him and were actuated by the basest of motives He cannot speak of these deluded sons of India without such epithets as "Rascals," "Scoundrels," etc. It must, however, be admitted that this gentleman was an exception. The rule was for a man, who was once trapped like this, to reconcile himself to the situation and begin to eat meat and fish with alacrity. For, having once fallen from the ideal, though unwittingly, these people saw no use in defending a breached fort, and, with that suicidal genius so strong in presentday Hinduism, made no distinction between a conscious fall from virtue and an accidental and forced lapse.

Vegetarians aud meat-eaters, however, had a common grievance at 21 Cromwell Road, namely that there was never enough to eat. This, of course, applied with far greater force to the vegetarians who could eat only a fraction of what was served, owing to their dietary scruples. The fact was that the rates charged at 21 Cromwell Road were so ridiculously low for England that nothing much could be given. First gone, first served, was the principle, and there was generally a scramble

for seats as soon as the bell rang. There was a keen desire for a seat at the tables where Miss Beck or Mr. Gordon George sat since there was a belief that a comparatively greater quantity of things could be got there though from personal experience I can say that there was no truth in this. However, one advantage could be derived from sitting at these official tables, and that was that a strictly equitable distribution would be made of the foodstuffs placed there unlike at other tables where the first who got hold of the dishes serv ed for themselves a quantity far in excess of what a just distribution would have given them. One curious result of this ration scarcity was that we vegetarians became popular and were invited by everybody to sit at their tables, for the rest could appropriate our share of the meat, in much the same way as tee-totalling bar students are popular with the rest at dinners and are invited by many to sit at their tables and thus give an extra potion of champagne to their comrades.

That food was not plentiful at 21 Cromwell Road may be readily admitted. But my own idea is that the scarcity was exaggerated a good deal by the inmates who invented many witty stories about it. One of these was that a man suffering from chronic and apparently incurable indigestion and given up as hopeless by many eminent doctors of France and England finally went to the very best

doctor in London whose advice was "Go to 21 Cromwell Road and you will be cured." Another story was that a diner in 21 Cromwell Road swallowed a fork since there was so very little at its end that he mistook the fork for the thing! Another popular joke was that a special art called stomachic telepathy had been evolved to perfection in Cromwell Road since every inmate instinctively knew when the bell would ring for lunch or dinner. The fact is that the Cromwellians' love of jokes made them grossly exaggerate the inconvenience, which, though real, was not. after all, a tenth of what they represented it to be.

A popular, but altogether unjustified, belief among the Indians of 21 Cromwell Road was that the India Office. under whose control the institution was, had directed the warden and others to spy out the movements of the Indians and that Miss Beck was principally engaged in such spying. Those were wretched days when the fear of the C. I. D. was very great with the educated classes, and all persons in the least connected with the Government, nay even one's professors and fellow students, were suspected by students of advanced political views. No wonder that in the general atmosphere of suspicion bred by the war, these young Indians suspected Miss Beck and mistook her kind and motherly enquires to be inquisitorial questions of a trained spy. The very day that I reached 21 Crom-

well Road, two Indians there warned me against this supposed danger and adjured me not to give out my movements to Miss Beck lest I should be ruined by her reports. It is rather curious that the Indian students always believed that these so-called informers exaggerated and perverted everything in their reports in order to ruin innocent people! I was in those days of the same opinion, and so, while unwilling to believe that the kind old lady had any such evil motives, resolved to be fully on my guard. Thus it happened that on two or three occasions when she asked me where I was going I told her repeatedly "Just round the corner, Miss Beck," a reply which was effective in stopping further enquiries from her. In retrospect, I am disposed to laugh at my behaviour then. I must confess that the third time I gave that reply I saw Miss Beck pained. But in my then frame of mind I felt no pity for the old lady. Later on, closer acquaintance and her many kindnesses convinced me that she was unjustly maligned and I ended by getting rid of all unjust suspicions. Every Christmas I used to receive a kind card from the lady, a reminder of the days I spent at Cromwell Road. Now that I am on the subject of spies, I may add here how deep-rooted the belief among the Indian students in England was that the India Office employed some spies of all classes and vocations including students, to watch them A year after

I had been in England, I went to Shakespeare Hut, the Y. M. C. A. Hostel for Indians, and, one evening, casually met a young intelligent-looking Bengali. He told me rather pathetically that some fellows had spread a scandal that he was an India Office spy and that most Indians were consequently avoiding him. I sympathized with him but spoke no more to him as I considered it dangerous to move with a man whom so many suspected. I told some of my friends about this young man and his grievances. One and all of them avoided him thereafter and thanked me profusely for my information. "The man is very probably innocent" said I. "Doesn't matter. We can't take risks" they said "We spend a lot of borrowed money here, and if this fellow is by any odd chance a spy he will ruin us and our families. It is bad enough to mix with people against whom there is no suspicion." I kept quiet. Some four days later. the young man left the hostel, quite disgusted at the boycott, and almost everybody was convinced that he was a spy and breathed a sigh of relief that he had gone! So also, when the Lytton Committee for enquiring into the condition of Indian students came to Oxford, the representatives of the Oxford Indians told Lord Lytton that there were spies employed by the India Office to watch their movements, and persisted in this belief despite his lordship's emphatic disclaimers. In 1922, the

Indian students were reassured to some extent, and now I believe the persecution of supposed spies must be considerably less than between 1919 and 1921.

To return to our story. After the dinner was over, I went upstairs. It was bitter cold, and all were huddling round a fire in the reading room. Some brave spirits were playing ping-pong and billiards. Others were reading books or chatting round the fire. I somehow managed to get a seat between two fat people, and, being wedged in and hardly a foot from the fireplace, got some warmth. After some ten minutes I found that I was getting unequal warmth, and being moreover tired by the steamer and train journey, felt an everpowering desire for sleep I went and searched for my bed and found it It had but one lean blanket which was threadbare, having perhaps braved many winters to the infinite detriment of its fluffy surface. Happily, the Bombay supplier had given me two thick blankets, and so down I went into the luggage room and fetched them and had them spread on the bed. Then I stretched myself on the bed. "Hardly eight thirty yet. So soon to bed?" asked Miss Beck, seeing my preparations. "Yes, Miss Beck," said I "I am tired to death." Seeing my example, some others, who were troubling the company with their interminable yawns, quietly followed. "I say, you have no hot water bottle?"

asked a neighbour. I hardly understood what he meant. I was thinking of the leather bottles used by the military for storing drinking water and said "No, I don't keep such things." What he meant was a hot water bottle for warming the feet. But my reply would have applied equally to that. In five minutes I fell fast asleep.

Next morning, I woke up at 5-30 A. M. and, as usual, went to take my bath. It was bitter cold and I had no slippers; the bath sandals the Bombay supplier gave me were not only curious in shape but would not also fit my feet. So I walked bare-foot in my pyjamas with my bath-towel and soap. To go to the bath-rooms I had to go up several steps to the third floor. I was shivering with cold, but thought that I should bathe before 6 A. M. as on board the ship. It was an open secret at Cromwell Road that the hot water would not be so hot after 8 A.M. and so all would flock to the bath-rooms between 7 and 8 A.M. To take a luxurious bath undisturbed, 6 A.M. was the time. Hence, I had pitched upon it along with another. We two went and took possession of two bath rooms and revelled in the baths forgetting all cares and worries, the beastly cold, the scanty food, the strange country and the unsettled nature of our plans. A comfortable bath after a good sleep is in my view a very good remedy for cares and worries. As I lay immersed in the hot water

of the bath, I felt myself to be like the Maoris described in geography text-books as wallowing in the hot springs. An early bath is always associated with religion among the Brahmins. Old associations made me repeat some hymns and verses. My example made my companion in the next bath-room also repeat some hymns of his part of the country. All this noise proved too much for the sleepers in the adjoining rooms, and, soon, we heard some clatterings on the doors, an unmistakable warning to us to stop. We stopped our recitations and went downstairs and changed. At breakfast, Mr. Knaster, the sub-warden, was asking people as to who the noise-makers were, and I and my friend pleaded guilty. "You go to bed at eight and get up at four. Pray, have some consideration for those who go to bed at one and get up at nine" said he. We promised not to recite our psalms and hymns so loudly in future. "Why not stop it altogether ?" asked Mr. Knaster. But we appealed to Miss Beck, who agreed with us, like the good old lady she was, that the recitation of psalms and hymns was quite essential but that they should always be muttered to oneself.

After breakfast, Miss Beck offered to take us to the South Kensington Museum. But I wanted to visit Mr. Mehta, the local agent of the Tatas. So I looked up the telephone number of his office in New Broad Street and tried to phone to him As

I was a novice in this art, what happened was rather funny I picked up the receiver and said "Hullo! Hullo!". The girl at the Exchange responded. Instead of giving the number, I asked absent-mindedly "Is that you, Mr. Mehta?". I heard a girl's laughter and then "No, I am the Exchange." Then, realizing my mistake, I gave the number and got into touch with Mr. Mehta. He told me that I could see him that evening. I therefore started after lunch and took the tube at South Kensington station. It was an Inner circle train. I didn't know this. I had been told that I would reach Liverpool Street, the station for New Broad Street, in 45 minutes. After an hour and a half I found myself again at South Kensington. I was astounded. I had seen the train moving for so long and yet I was in the same place though the train had not turned back. On enquiring of a neighbour I learned that I had made one full circle and had passed Liverpool Street without noticing it. With unabated enthusiasm and somewhat more watchful eyes I again travelled in the train till it reached Liverpool Street where I alighted and made my way to Capell House, New Broad Street, where Mr. Mehta's Office was, with the aid of a constable whose soldierly bearing and unfailing good humour impressed me very much. The police are much sought after in England and are regarded as the friends of the people. In our

country, on the other hand, all men avoid the police who are quite unjustly regarded as the enemies of the people. I shall deal with the reasons for this strange phenomenon in a later chapter.

I had expected the Tatas to have a whole building for themselves after what I had seen of their palatial office at Bombay. But I had reckoned without the immensely higher rents prevailing at London. The Tatas had only one floor out of four for themselves. I saw Mr. Mehta who was the son of Sir Phirozeshah Mehta and was the very model of politeness. He gave me much sound advice, took down my address, and asked me to call on him whenever I wanted, and then we parted. I returned to Cromwell Road at about 5 P.M., and found some tea being distributed. On enquiry, I learnt that twice a week, roughly speaking, this tea was being given free to all Indians who cared to go to 21 Cromwell Road and that the officers of the institution were supposed to be "At Home" on those occasions to the Indian students. Very generally, there were lectures by prominent people on these days. I was glad to find a tea in progress and took my fair share of it as well as of the cakes and currants. One Muslim student from the United provinces who introduced himself to me as the father of six children was eating currants by handfuls and asking me also to do the same I demurred

to this wholesale devastation and said that it was hardly decent. "What! it is our money which is spent for these tea parties. The India Office supplies the sinews of war. This is why I come on every such occasion here and get what little dividend I can for Mother India" he said, and I had a hearty laugh. I treated this reply as lightly as his statement that he had six children, but six months' acquaintance with him made me realize how truthful he had been in giving both these statements. Incidentally, at these teas I used to see many other Indians, from Oxford, from Cambridge, from Edinburgh and from London. The Oxford and Cambridge Indians used to treat the rest in much the same way as the Chinese are said to have regarded foreigners, and, needless to say, many uncomplimentary side remarks were whispered against these university men by the rest.

The third day after I went to Cromwell Road, a bed fell vacant in the verandah adjoining the big hall and I shifted to the verandah where I found two others who, though Punjabi Hindus, were quite easy to get on with. Mr. G had gone to Cambridge to try to get admission into some College there though it was the middle of a term. Mr. A, having become thoroughly disgusted with Cromwell Road meals, had gone to live as a paying guest with an Egyptian who had married an Englishwoman. Friends of Mr. A had

apprehensions about Indo-Egyptian relations. Mr. A's parting words to me were these. " Mr. Ayyar, you are sure to get into the I.C.S. Why put up with this hellish food? If you will listen to me, choose some place which will cater to your belly better. Otherwise, well; you may be starved to death before you get into the I.C.S." Then he vigorously shook hands with me and left. I heard later that Mr. A exhibited his famous samples contained in the long case to various renowned London firms. Suffice to say, no great revolution took place in the London market. Once in three or four days I used to see Mr. A at 21 Cromwell Road. Gradually the visits became fewer and fewer and finally stopped altogether.

Mr. A's advice had some effect on me. I resolved to supplement the lean meals of Cromwell Road by substantial lunches outside. The first experiment was quite by accident and not very hopeful. I was very much in need of a good dressing gown as I found it impossible to walk up the stairs at 5 A.M. for a bath in my pyjamas So I started one day after breakfast to buy a new dressing gown and to order for two new suits. These latter were necessary as the suits given by the Bombay supplier were ridiculous in the extreme. Miss Beck had with a woman's eye seen the impossibility of my being allowed to walk about London in those clothes, and, with the tact so natural to women, did not

want to broach the subject herself. She told me that Mr. N. C. Sen, an assistant Adviser to Indian Students, would be delighted to see me in his room. I went and was courteously received by Mr. Sen who was a grave elderly gentleman. Somehow or other, though I had never before met him, I felt more at home with him than with Miss Beck or Mr. Knaster or Mr. Gaster or Mr. Gordon George. The ties of the common motherland and dark skin perhaps accounted for this. Mr. Sen talked to me about my going to Oxford and various other matters. Then, as if casually, he told me that my clothes were too thin for the English winter and that I should go in for two new suits. "Besides," said he with a benevolent smile "those clothes are not of the latest cut." I replied that I did not care for fashion. "No, nor do I" said he "But all of us want to escape being laughed at." I suddenly remembered that many people had smiled at seeing me go past. But I had attributed this to the natural amusement of white people at seeing a dark man. Now I knew the real reason. Without any more argument I agreed to Mr. Sen's proposal. Then I asked Mr. Sen when I should go to Oxford. "There is no hurry now." said he "You won't get admission this year as it is the middle of a term. As soon as your new suits are ready, you can go to Oxford and see Mr. Burrows, the local adviser." I thanked Mr. Sen and left.

I ordered for two new suits at once from a reputed tailor in London. The whole of the establishment there got a fit of uncontrollable mirth at seeing the misfit in which I was dressed. " Wherever was this suit made, sir ? " asked the tailor taking the measurements. · "At Bombay" said I. "Are they so bad at it, sir? Well, I never—" and then, perhaps out of politeness, he cut himself short. This tailor had, like all English firms of repute, only fixed prices though later on I came to learn by experience that this fixity was by no means static but thoroughly dynamic, a kind of fluid fixity which left considerable scope for bargaining though nothing comparable to the higgling in India. I also learnt subsequently that the fluid fixity would rise or fall like a barometer on coming into contact with each customer. After taking my measurements, the tailor said " Sir, excuse me if I am impolite, but your hat does look odd." I resolved to buy a new hat and on my return journey stepped into a hatter's and bought a fine Velour hat for 45 shillings. A friend had told me that my Bombay hat could be sold to some dealer ; I took this opportunity of getting rid of that On my broaching the proposal to the girl who had sold me the hat, she was overtaken by a violent fit of laughing and said " Oh, no, sir, we don't buy hats. Where did you buy it, sir ? " "At Bombay" said I. " Perhaps, the dealers round the corner may buy it,"

she replied. I put on my new hat and wrapping my old one in a newspaper which she gave me I stepped into the street leaving the girl to enjoy her uncontrollable fit of laughter. I directed my foot-steps to the shop indicated by the girl and found it to be a curio shop! Needless to say, I never entered it. Then I understood why the girl had got such a fit of laughter. I thought of throwing the old hat away somewhere but finally resolved to keep it with me in order to confront the Bombay supplier with it. Besides, I had begun to contract an affection for the poor thing. It had travelled with me over land and sea for six thousand miles. Would I justified in deserting so faithful a thing simply because it had no voice to reproach me with? I am ashamed to say that in spite of all the generous emotions I felt then I threw away the hat just before returning to India.

As I felt hungry, I went into a wayside restaurant and wanted to eat something. It was a restaurant of the commoner sort, and my demand for purely vegetable food roused much hilarity. "This is all the vegetable we have got" said the waitress bringing bread and butter and some boiled potatoes and cauliflower. Nothing loath, I made a meal out of these to the wonder and amusement of the waitress and my neighbours. On another occasion I had to content myself with bread and jam. But those were days before I came to know

of first-class vegetarian restuarants like Abdulla's, the Indian Restaurant, the English Vegetarian Restaurant, etc. etc.

Meanwhile, life in Cromwell Road was pursuing its even flow. Miss Beck had very great difficulty in licking the new-comers into shape, but she was never dismayed by the enormity of the task. She almost always sat with the inmates of the hostel at dinner as well as by the fire-side and conversed with them on all kinds of topics. Sometimes, no doubt, she must have been greatly embarassed by the awkward questions which some Indians, ill-acquainted with British manners, put to her. For instance, one day, she distributed some chocolates among us telling us that it was her birthday. After wishing her many happy returns, I asked her what her age was. This simple question, which would invariably have been asked in India and no offence taken, seemed to upset her a little. She asked me to guess. My inexperience of the west made me bluntly ask her " 60? ". She said with warmth " Oh no !". I ought to have stopped, but didn't. " 55 ? " I queried. " No " said she. " 50 ? " I asked with a pertinacity which now astonishes me " No " replied she. " Then, what is your age ?" I asked. "I am not so old as you think " was her reply. Miss Beck was never offended with me for my impoliteness, perhaps because she saw that

it was due to my ignorance of western conventions.

Another curious episode in the early days of my stay at Cromwell Road related to a man called Mr. X. He had unnecessarily made himself thoroughly unpopular with all other Indians by his carrying tales to the warden and the rest, by an inquisitorial questioning of all whom he met and noting down the answers in a note book, thus lending colour to a suspicion that he was a spy, and by his affected contempt for Indian customs. Whenever a new Indian came, Mr. X used to ask him what his name and father's and mother's names were, his village, details of property, brothers, sisters, etc., and intended movements in Europe. All the replies were taken down in a note-book. Most people resented this, and one Punjabi Muslim even went to assault him when questioned about his sisters' names. Mr. X was saved from a beating on that occasion by the interference of half a dozen of us. But his alarmed look and precipitate retreat, even dropping his note-book, proclaimed his abject cowardice. The affronted Muslim was about to tear the book when the warden appeared, pacified all, and returned the book to Mr. X. Poor Mr. X resolved to leave Cromwell Road within a week. But he did not leave it early enough to escape an actual assault and further ridicule. He went to Oxford for seeking admission to an

Honour School and got the ever-famous reply from the head of a college " Mr. X, you are too old to learn anything new, so there is no use admitting you." Another Indian who was waiting outside for an interview overheard this through the open door and spread the news like wild fire among the Indians in Cromwell Road who were most grateful to receive it. So when Mr. X returned, he found all the inmates of Cromwell Road roaring with laughter over the reply which had blasted his hopes. Most prominent among the merry-makers were two medical students from Edinburgh. As fate would have it, one was to occupy the same room with Mr. X while the other got only a berth in the verandah. Mr. X gnashed his teeth at his scoffer's securing a place in the room but could do nothing. His secret anger only increased the more. The next morning both the medical students had to attend an examination and so wanted to shave early. As the one in the verandah had no shaving mirror he also went to his friend's room, where there were two basins and mirrors, and both the friends began to shave. It was about 6 A.M. then and Mr. X never used to get up from bed earlier than 8 A.M. But, that day, he woke up at 6 A.M., and saw with unconcealed anger the gentleman from the verandah lathering his face at his basin. He got up from bed and said to him " Fellow, who asked you to come to my room, and who gave

you permission to use my basin? Get out, or I shall neck you out." "I shall save you that trouble" replied the other, and, placing his shaving materials on the table, went and gave Mr. X a number of thundering blows which were distinctly heard in the bath-rooms twenty-five yards away. Mr. X howled with pain till the other medical student after having enjoyed the fun, took pity on him and stopped his comrade just as myself and others rushed from the bath-rooms to see what the matter was. "I have been beaten like a drum" was the expressive way in which Mr. X related the incident. The very next day he left Cromwell Road for good.

Miss Beck was very particular that no women of evil repute should be allowed to come to the hostel and mix with the students, and generally succeeded in doing so. One exception however occurred. A certain handsome young Frenchwoman used to come to the hostel and was not suspected of anything bad. This woman gave out that all her six brothers had been killed in the great war and that her home in Amiens had been burnt by the Germans and she forced to flee the country and seek refuge in England. All believed her. But daily her behaviour, whenever Miss Beck was absent, became more and more suspect. One day she asked for a diamond-set ring from a young Hindu and got it The next morning, however, he repented. Having

consulted a few friends. he bought a trinket worth seven shillings six pence and that evening gave it to the woman, taking back his ring, saying "That ring has a sentimental value for me, Miss. So please take this." "Certainly" was the astounding reply·" I am sorry, Monsieur, I gave you some trouble. I took the former ring because you gave it." One thing which astonished me in this woman was her outward polish as evidenced by the above reply. She was also, to all appearance, a guileless creature. A year later she figured in the courts claiming maintenance for her child from a man who disclaimed its fathership but was ordered to pay ten shillings per week. At the trial of this case she gave out her occupation as a "model." Then we understood how she was able to pose so successfully.

No wine or other alcohol was ever sold in 21 Cromwell Road. Nay, it was not allowed to be brought in by anybody. But I must say that this did not prevent the inmates from taking to drink. Those who felt inclined to do so went out and had their fill. Indians who had contracted the drink habit used to harangue to the others to take to the cup, and many succumbed. The Bar was another agent in converting Indians to drink. Few could resist the temptation of the champagne served at the dinners.

After some days' stay at Cromwell Road, I

learnt from a friend that the I. C. S. open competition examinations had been thoroughly overhauled and that the new system would be brought into operation from 1921, the year of my first chance. I was, if anything, cheered by the change of curriculum, for that saved me the trouble of taking up Roman law and Roman history and studying Latin. I could choose for my optionals the whole of English History, European History and English Private Law.

As soon as the new suits were ready, I prepared to go to Oxford. I went to the India Office to take a letter to the Local Adviser at Oxford. Mr. Arthur Davies who was the president of the Madras Advisory Committee had written a strong letter of recommendation to Dr. Arnold who was the head of the London Committee. I must say that I had no great confidence in the advisers in England, mainly due to the many stories I heard from Indians at Cromwell Road. One story was this. A certain Matriculate from the Punjab had, it seems, been with many sugary words given a letter by the London Committee to the Oxford Committee and assured that he would be certain of an admission. Owing to the absence of the Oxford Adviser, this Punjabi was walking about the streets of Oxford with the letter when some fellow-Indians met him and warned him about the duplicity of these advisers. So the man tore open the letter

and found, it seems, the following words. " When graduates cannot get admission into the University, what use is there troubling about these matriculates? Such claims as this man's deserve only summary rejection." Greatly enraged, the Punjabi is said to have torn the letter to pieces and forthwith gone to the head of a college and got admission by his independent and unaided pleading. I was not able to verify the truth of this story which was very much current among the Indians and was believed in by them devoutly. My own idea is that the story was the invention of some clever brain to suit the highly strung temperaments of the Indian students. Be that as it may, the story had this much effect on me that I insisted on the Assistant of Dr. Arnold's reading out to me the letter he gave. He read it out and I found that he had written a really strong letter in my favour and regretted that I had entertained any suspicions. I went to Oxford from Paddington, but owing to my newness to the place caught a train which involved getting down at Reading and catching another instead of a direct non-stop train. As soon as the hideous smoke and dust of London had been left behind, the scenery became pleasing though, being winter, the naked trees added a certain gloom. That day there was a heavy fall of snow. A snow-fall is beautiful to look at. It appears like innumerable small feathers being

thrown down from the sky. The nearest comparison is that of the bursting of silk-cotton pods and the falling of the cotton, or the ocean foam being lashed up by the waves, but neither of these is near enough to give a correct idea of a snow-fall. The train had heating arrangements. So we were quite comfortable inside. I sat near the window in order to look at the scenery and the snow-fall. Once I tried to open it but a lady in the compartment said "Please don't. It is bitter cold outside." So I desisted. One thing that struck me very much in England was that there were compartments reserved for non-smokers in every train though their number would hardly exceed 1 per cent of the male population and 50 per cent of the female. Nobody could smoke in a non-smoking compartment except with the consent of all the inmates and should stop whenever anybody objected. In India, where the non-smokers are perhaps in a majority even among males and are in an absolutely over-whelming majority among females, the theory is no doubt, that nobody should smoke in a railway compartment without the permission of all his fellow-passengers, but, owing to the absence of separate compartments for non-smokers and the lack of courage of the average passenger, smokers make every compartment a hell for non-smokers, blowing their smoke right into the faces of non-smokers and even women,

and behaving with an unparalleled insolence whenever a stray person objects to their smoking. In England, the liberty of both the smoker and non-smoker is respected and protected by the law and by the citizens. But any person who is willing to abstain from smoking for the period he is in the train can occupy a non-smoking compartment. Hence there is no caste rigidity in this division as is only too likely to develop if introduced into India.

The train stopped at Reading and I had to wait two hours to catch the one going to Oxford. I used the time profitably by making a visit to the famous Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory and seeing the up-to-date way in which biscuits are manufactured without anybody touching them with hands. I saw nothing there which could not be done equally well by Indians if only they were given the chance. But India is in the back-water of industrialism and is more busy with importing her own raw products touched up by more advanced countries than with any serious attempt to meet all her needs herself as far as possible.

After returning from the biscuit factory, I boarded the train for Oxford. Within an hour, the towers and spires of the Oxford Colleges came in sight. The sight of these ancient buildings inspired in me much the same love, awe and reverence as I used to feel whenever I saw the towers and flagstaffs of

our ancient temples. The places where generations of students had found solace for their minds struck me as strangely similar to the places where generations of men had found solace for their souls. I got down from the train, took a taxi, went to the Randolph hotel, put my things there and went to Mr. Burrows the local Adviser, who was living at 9 Canterbury Road. Mr. Burrows received me warmly, perused the letter written by the India Office, and told me that he would secure for me admission into Magdalen or Christchurch next October. I told him that I wanted to join the University the very next term. "Then, you will have to become a Non-Collegiate" said he "for the colleges don't take anybody in the middle of a year. Perhaps, as you are a vegetarian, it will be better for you also to be a Non-Collegiate since it is very difficult to get purely vegetarian dishes in colleges while it is quite possible to arrange for them in private houses." I agreed. So we went to Mr. Baker, the Censor of the Non-Collegiate Delegacy. He readily agreed to admit me at the beginning of the next term which would commence on the 18th of January. After securing the admission, I went to the Randolph hotel, stayed there for the night and left next morning for London. The bill at the Randolph was rather heavy, and the tip too was nothing inconsiderable. Here I may give the three

principal differences between an English hotel and the average Indian hotel. In India there is a fixed rate for all eaters, and the customers are given their fill; whereas in England a man pays for whatever he eats, and there is, in general, no fixed rate, and even where there are lunches and dinners at fixed rates a person never gets his fill but only the things mentioned. The second great difference is the great variety of things to choose from in an English hotel unlike in an Indian hotel where only one uniform kind of meal can be secured. The third is that the tip alone in England costs more than a meal in India In a good hotel the minimum tip expected is six pence though to win a real word of thanks from the waiter or waitress, instead of the formal curt half-injured "thank'u, sir," a shilling will be required. If tips are not given, the persons practising this abstinence will be on subsequent occasions made to wait long before they are served, the tip-givers being attended to with alacrity. From mere shame people will thereafter pay tips, for it will be none too comfortable and dignified to be waiting while others who came later are eating. Some restaurants like Lyon's numerous ones have mitigated the tip evil but have not succeeded in entirely putting a stop to it. In some big hotels waiters are paid nothing. They are merely given their grub and allowed to keep all the tips they get. In Southern France, in order

to stop the tip evil, some hotel-keepers passed a rule that no tips should be given or received, but that 10 per cent over and above the bills should be charged and the proceeds distributed among the waiters and other members of the hotel staff. Soon, however, the ambition of some customers to be served earlier than those who came before made them give tips, and the whole evil sprang up again. The horrified customers found that by the rule they were simply mulcted of 10 per cent on their bills without any corresponding benefit and so agitated and got the rule cancelled.

My return journey to London was uneventful. I had booked two rooms in Oxford from the 6th of January. There was still nearly a month and a half left to me, and I spent it all in seeing London.

CHAPTER VII.

LONDON.

LONDON is certainly the most gigantic town known to history. Never in the history of the world has there been a town equal to it in size, population, trade and political importance. The giants of the ancient world, Babylon, Pataliputra Alexandria, Rome, Athens and Carthage, will look veritable pigmies when compared to it. Modern towns like New York have also tried in vain to excel it in population and importance. Not the least remarkable thing about London is its enormous size. London may be called a city. It may also be called with equal truth a collection of cities. In the 17th century, London was only a big town. After the great fire, and especially in the 19th century, the growth has been tremendous and in all directions The London of Pepys was much smaller than the London of Johnson which in turn was much smaller than the London of Dickens which was very much smaller than the London of to-day. The elephant's cub of the 17th century

has become a full-grown elephant in the 20th and is still growing. Whether it is a healthy growth or a disease like elephantiasis time alone can show. The extent of London is so great now that it is a county by itself, and millions of its inhabitants have never seen the whole of it. It is not in mere extent that London excels. The population is even more striking than the extent. No less than seven and a half millions live there, a population far larger than that of Norway and Denmark put together. Even in an age of mammoth things and super-products this is something colossal. However much we may deprecate man's attaching any weight to mere size, there is something in the gigantic which strikes man with wonder, awe and reverence. The ocean is so impressive and so much admired, loved and feared only because of its apparently boundless extent, and limitless waters. Exactly the same is the case with the sky with its infinite space and sun and moon and stars of eternal light. Man's soul, coming as it does from the infinite, yearns after the infinite or anything which practically approaches the infinite whether in time or in space or in numbers. Hence his love and reverence for the sky, the ocean, the mountains and the rivers; hence also his awe and elation of heart at seeing huge congregations of human beings. Who will not be roused by the sight of a sea of heads or faces? And yet what is there remarkable in such a sight except

mere size and numbers? Bulk for bulk, an ant is any day a far more remarkable animal than an elephant or a whale. But, for all that, who will care to go to a zoo to see an ant though it is an apostle of quality and efficiency, and how many will rush to see the elephant or the whale? The thing is so obvious that no zoo has ever thought of putting an ant on show though all will count it a pride to have a live elephant and a full skeleton of a whale. But if a trillion of ants were to assemble and remain in a place, many men and women will be eager to see the spectacle. Alas for those who preach that bigness is not greatness, humanity will always be moved by bigness and will hold it to be one of the signs of greatness, and I am not prepared to say that humanity is wrong especially when I see the apostles of the crusade against bigness apostrophising the sky and the ocean and going into raptures over them but failing to exhibit the same enthusiasm over a homely cup of salt water taken from the ocean. I must confess that I was very much moved by the size and population of London even as I am moved by the size and population of my dear motherland. Our country occupies so much of the attention of the world only because of its gigantic size and population. If it were as small in area and population as Montenegro or San Marino, it would have fallen into great contempt and oblivion though no deterioration in

quality had taken place. More than half the joyous swelling of the Britisher's breast when he thinks of the British Empire is due to its enormous size and population and not to any consideration about its qualitative excellence. As I say, I was frankly struck with awe and admiration at the immensity of London, and I have no reason to think that I was a solitary exception.

The sea of houses in London is something which must be seen to be fully appreciated. As far as the eyes can reach, you see only houses and factories factories and houses, not always beautiful or attractive but tremendously impressive collectively. Often, whole streets are built on the same model and present an ugly barrack-like uniformity as unpleasing to the eye as it is inartistic. This is so because each man has not built his house after his own aesthetic instinct, but some capitalist has built them all on a type design with a view to renting them out. It is notoriously easier for man to copy than to invent. So some of the London streets have houses of identically the same shape like the cells of a bee-hive. It is a wonder that the inmates and the visitors don't mistake the houses oftener than they do. Perhaps, being forewarned of the difficulty, they are most careful about the number. If the number is lost, it is hopeless to find out a particular house in London even though the street is known, for very often people in the

same street do not know the names of any but their immediate neighbours and sometimes not even of these. Each person follows his own vocation and moves in his own circle. Even in towns like Oxford, houses of uniform type are sometimes found, but the thing is rarer than in London and in any case the difficulty of tracing out a person is far less owing to the smaller size of the towns and the greater circle of acquaintances. As I have said, many of the houses of London are unattractive, without any front yard or backyard or a single patch of green anywhere near. But the case is different in the garden cities which have grown up all round the parent city. Here, as the very name indicates, there are plenty of trees and flowering plants and a strenuous attempt is made with a large measure of success to combine the advantages of town and country life. For, town life pure and simple without any touch of the country tends to sap physical, mental and moral vitality. That is why Professor Marshall said that all men of prominence in London in any walk of life could be proved to be the descendants of country people who migrated to London not more than three generations back. After the drastic improvement of London now going on in the shape of garden cities, extensive parks etc., it is doubtful whether the same devastating effects of town life will continue. There are many beautiful parks in London

now where the people can have as much fresh air as they like. Hyde Park, Finnsbury Park and Hampstead Heath are only a few examples. These are aptly called the "lungs of the city." If they were to be abolished, London will become uninhabitable. In former days there used to be a distinct cleavage between East End and West End, the former being the proletarian quarters and the latter the aristocratic. This distinction has become somewhat blurred owing to the rise of North London and South London where the intermediate classes reside and by these classes also invading the west end. Still there is an appreciable difference even now between the fashionable West End quarters like South Kensington, Piccadilly Circus and Russell Square and the far poorer and dirtier East End quarters like Chatham, Poplar and Chinatown. Naturally, there is more crime in East End than in West End, but I am not satisfied that the East End man is a more criminal type than the West End one. Many refined crimes take place in West End which do not attract anything like the attention drawn to the coarse and brutal crimes of East End. I had a special desire to see East End at close quarters, for our industrial towns like Bombay and Calcutta tend to develop far more East Ends than West Ends and a study of the measures adopted to ameliorate the condition of East End would be of great use in solving similar

problems in India. Besides, I had a great curiosity to see the slums of East End so graphically and luridly described in many of the books I had read. Hence I devoted nearly three complete days to a close scrutiny of East End. I travelled by buses and also walked along many streets. The people were certainly poorer and less refined than in West End, and shops and cinemas were distinctly fifth rate. One thing which surprised and pleased me was that many of the worst houses had been pulled down and were being re-built in a better style. I was even more pleased to find a band of university students from Oxford doing disinterested work for the poor in the slums, it being vacation time, I was told that many such bands from different universities and many philanthropic associations were working in East End trying to render financial, medical, intellectual and religious aid. This golden chain of sympathy between the intelligentsia and the proletariat is perhaps one of the greatest safeguards against Bolshevism and the persecution of the intelligentsia in England as in Russia. Indian university students can profitably copy this praiseworthy activity of their western brothers. A third thing which struck me in East End was the growing awakening of the working classes to their political power. In casual talk, many labourers, whose mental calibre will not be higher than that of the average Indian cooly, told

me how they were going to capture the municipal bodies and parliament and redress the wrongs of the poor. Many complained to me that the great war had made their condition much worse though some of them still wore the overcoats given to them as soldiers. I asked them whether Lloyd George had not said that it was a war to end war and that at the end of the war England would be a place fit for heroes to live in. They laughed outright. "Who but foreigners like you would have taken Lloyd George seriously when he uttered all this nonsense of bringing the Kaiser to trial, warring to end war, and making England a place fit for heroes to live in? In fact, as all England knows, he has made England with its horribly high prices, watered beer and monstrous taxes and rates a place fit for only heroes to live in. As for war to end war, the phrase has been invented only recently and will doubtless continue to be used for centuries to gull honest workmen and will have no more meaning than the many 'perpetual peaces' strewn all over the pages of history" said a politico among them. I was impressed by the shrewdness of the remarks and thought that if this man was a fair sample of a budding labour politician the party need not fear comparison with its rivals. On the whole, my visits to East End convinced me that the difference between East End and West End had been grossly exaggerated much to the disad-

vantage of the former. This was, of course, due to the fact that most of the writers were West End men or at least members of the middle classes who pretended to have more in common with the aristocrats than with the proletariat. With the emergence of first-rate Socialist authors like H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, and Bernard Shaw, things will change for the better.

London counts among its immense population almost all the races of the world and people from nearly every country under the sun. Thus, this mammoth town is a microcosm of the world. Nobody need feel himself a stranger in London. He can soon find some of his fellow countrymen. It may perhaps be not a matter for surprise that the inhabitants of every country in Europe, including Lapland, Finland, and Iceland, are to be found in this great emporium. Nor may it cause much surprise that Indians and other nations inhabiting the British Empire are to be found in plenty there. But it must surprise anybody to see Liberians, Chinamen, Siamese, Annamese, Persians, Afghans, Nepalese, Turks, Arabs, Egyptians, Nubians, Abyssinians and others in London. Not the least of London's attractions is the variety of races to be found there. In fact, it is an anthropological museum if only one keeps his eyes open. This fact makes the Londoner more tolerant about colour than the mofussil Englishmen though

even the latter is normally devoid of race and colour prejudice.

Another striking thing about London is its enormous and varied manufactures. The dirty-looking noisy factories whose smoke is one of the perennial nuisances of London are also the main-stay of a large part of its population. Many, while mentioning the smoke emitted by the factories, omit to mention the food given by them. Almost every kind of manufacture is carried on in London from hand-lacing to steam-engine and air-ship making, and factories vary in size from those employing thousands of hands to those where the workers are only two or three.

Even more remarkable than its manufactures is its trade. The volume of London's trade is immense. Ancient Tyre, Carthage and Syracuse can no more bear comparison with it than an ant with an elephant. Despite the great war and the depression it brought about in trade and despite constant strikes of miners, the vast volume of trade is something appalling. Ships arrive in the Thames every day from the ends of the world, and ships depart from the Thames every day to the ends of the world. The East India Docks are a sight to see. London is indeed peculiarly fortunate in having the Thames. The dirty water of this river is totally different from the pure waters of the Ganges, but from the point of view of giving food

to the people of their basins and estuaries both the rivers are equally sacred. The gift of the Ganges is more direct, the food given by it is from its own body, and so it is appropriately called Gangamata "*Mother* Ganges"; the Thames, on the contrary, is a sterner taskmaster and gives a more indirect gift requiring arduous exertion, great risk and untold labour. Hence it has been appropriately called "*Father* Thames." The same difference may be seen in the Englishman's preferring to call his hard-yielding close-fisted country "Fatherland" and the Indian's preferring to call his indulgent all-giving country "Motherland." One thing peculiarly struck me about English rivers. They were always having plenty of water. There are two reasons for this. The first is that rarely is river water used for irrigation in England where the problem is drainage, or how to get rid of the surplus water, and not irrigation. So, river water, like donkey's milk, is not much in request, and hence rivers have plenty of water. The second reason is that there is less loss by evaporation. In India, on the contrary, river water is much in request for irrigation, and even the mighty Ganges cannot give as much water at times as its farmer devotees want. And of course, the loss by evaporation is far greater. But the English rivers are excellent for navigation whereas our rivers, with a few exceptions, are practically useless for naviga-

tion owing to sandbars, whirlpools, waterfalls, eddies, fierce currents, torrential flow and shallowness. Anybody who sees the volume of sea-borne trade at London can readily understand England's naval supremacy and her desire to retain it at all costs. England is primarily a trading and manufacturing country and hardly grows one-fourth the quantity of grain and other food-stuffs needed for her. If she loses her naval supremacy or if some enemy power were to invent super-aircraft able to sink ships by bombing, she will be starved out in three months. Even the devastation by German submarines in the late war wrought a lot of havoc and raised the prices of foodstuffs enormously, making even rationing necessary in articles like meat, sugar and butter. As an Englishman told me feelingly "You may as well ask England to give up her naval supremacy as ask India to give up the Himalayas and choose the river Ganges as its frontier." And he spoke the truth, at any rate as far as the consequences went. But nobody should think that London's internal trade is negligible. A market catering to the varying needs of 7¼ millions can never be dull. Mammoth establishments like Harrod's and Selfridge's stock every conceivable article and sell things at the cheapest prices consistent with quality. A friend of mine told me that in 1921 he saw a Gandhi cap exposed for sale at Harrod's. This gives us an indication of the

push and all-embracing activity of the leading London Merchants. Big firms send cars free for intending customers, with no obligation to buy anything. The clever traders know that once the customers walk into their parlours they can somehow make them buy something by an attractive display of their things. Few human beings are so mean as to go in a car free with no intention of buying anything. I have remarked above that the fixed prices of London firms are subject to the law of relativity and have merely a fluid fixity. This however does not apply to big and world-renowned concerns like Harrod's and Selfridge's whose prices have a fixed fixity irrespective of the customer's colour, race or country. These big firms have also several enterprising ways of drawing attraction and pushing the sales. One is, as I have already said, the supplying of free cars to would-be customers Another is by glaring and alluring advertisements not only of articles but also of record bargain sales. Long queues of ladies wait for the opening of the doors on these days in the case of big and reputable firms in order to have the first choice. Every alternate day there is a bargain sale, and some firms have a bargain sale on always. Prices are slightly lowered in view of the tremendous increase in sales. No humbug is played as is only too often the case in India where old and worthless things are frequently palmed off on the

public on such occasions. A third is by showing all the latest news by means of electric lighting arrangements on their top floors facing the streets. Of course, their best way of securing business is by winning the confidence of the public by the quality of their goods and their reasonable and fixed prices which are the same for a child of five as well as for a man of fifty. In this connection I must say that perhaps advertising costs as much as the article itself in advanced western countries. This, however, is not to be considered as wholly a waste but rather as a painful necessity. Without crying up the virtues of articles, men are not likely to buy them. Competition and free trade require advertisements. Many a useful trade in India dies out because of lack of sufficient advertisement. No doubt, many deleterious things, harmful to the body, mind and soul, are sold every day by advertisements in England as in India. A man's tongue is in the last resort the greatest and cheapest advertiser, and there never was a day when traders and hawkers did not cry up their goods. Of course, it is to be regretted that so much money should be wasted on a thing which has so little productive value, but the same applies to the administration of justice and the immense army of judges, magistrates and lawyers. If men would but settle their disputes amicably or buy goods even though not so heavily advertised, a lot of the waste could be

avoided. But human nature being what it is, we cannot hope for either of those things and so ought to put up with their consequential evil. My only keen regret is that some of the most beautiful country places in England, especially if they happen to be near the rail road, are spoilt by ugly posters and placards blatantly advertising some ridiculous wares, pills and tonics. One direct consequence of London's enormous population, trade and manufactures is the heavy traffic. Trains, tubes, trams, buses, and taxis are seen in innumerable numbers and are almost always crowded. Some of the leading thoroughfares like Charing Cross, Victoria and Leicester Square are always dangerous to cross for inexperienced pedestrians. One of the most important duties of the London police is to regulate the traffic. Those tall soldierly constables do this work admirably. A single raising of the hand, and traffic is held up in one direction; a single wave of the hand, and the traffic held up in another direction flows. Implicit obedience is rendered to these mute signs, and the magistrates of England are not likely to let off lightly a man why disobeys. For, if disobedience is not cured then and there and is allowed to spread, the resultant loss of lives by careless driving etc. will be appalling. In the middle of these heavy duties these constables find time to to give directions to people to go to the places they want, and to warn

careless passengers. One day, as I was passing along Leicester Square I found a fellow-Indian, who was evidently afraid of the traffic, and was looking round in all directions and proceeding timorously, about to be run over by a taxi which was closely followed by some fifty other motor vehicles of various kinds. The constable regulating the traffic suddenly held up his hand, and the leading taxi stopped within six inches of the panic-stricken Indian who stood rooted to the spot in utter bewilderment. The constable swooped down on him, pulled him safely to the place where he was standing. and said to him "My boy, if you turn round like this instead of keeping your eyes front and your nerves cool you will never go back to your native country." After the vehicles had passed, he took the Indian to the other side of the road and advised him to cross the roads thereafter only with eyes front and nerves cool. The greatest crowding in the trains and buses is in the mornings and evenings when the army of clerks, typists, accountants, business men etc. go and return from the City. Though the services during those hours are more numerous, still the crowding in the trains and buses is great on most days. As the distance to be covered is only very short, people don't complain so very much and are content to stand in crowds in the corridors, considering themselves fortunate if they get a strap to catch hold of.

Many don't get even this and are thrown on their neighbours whenever there is a jolting. As there will be no space for falling owing to the crowd, nobody falls down. When I was in Cromwell Road I remember that the trains, and especially the underground, were horribly overcrowded in the mornings and evenings owing partly to the dislocation brought about by the war in the shape of a depletion of the rolling stock. In those days many were the sufferings of the passengers and especially of the hordes of office girls. Chivalry had declined after the sufferagette movement and the great war, and many men were not willing to offer their seats or straps to ladies. Those who were willing had little to offer. Those who were willing and had something to offer found such a crowd between the intended offerees and themselves that they despaired of ever effecting a passage for them The appeals of the "underground" asking people to travel at midday, whenever possible, and thus relieve the congestion in the mornings and evenings had little effect except on shoppers. Discontent waxed high A cry for more trains and more accommodation was raised. An indignant M P. asked a question in parliament on this burning topic. The reply, while admitting the evil, also attributed part of it to the reluctance of the people to walk even short distances and to their getting into the trains and adding to the congestion. "The fact is that

Londoners have lost the art of walking " was the witty reply. They have also lost the art of sitting" was the wittier retort. Soon, more trains began to run, and the congestion was somewhat relieved though there will always be some crowding in the mornings and evenings due to the movements of the army of clerks and other business men to and from the City.

Owing to the great population, trade and traffic, a most efficient body of police is required in London, and so we come to another remarkable feature of this great City, its wonderful and world-famous police force. The fame of the London police is very great and thoroughly deserved. A better class of men has never adorned the police force in any country under the sun at any time. To a certain extent, the London constable is the creation of London traffic and London thieves. Some of the most intelligent thieves and scoundrels of the world live in London which by its size, population and trade offers them wonderful opportunities for amassing wealth and avoiding detection. To deal with these thieves, men of courage, strength integrity and reasonable intelligence are required, men who are not cowards or weaklings or idiots, men who cannot be bribed and cannot be daunted. For traffic also, men of imposing physical appearance and responsibility are required. A dwarf at the cross-ways will look as ridiculous as a cat in a Zoo.

Owing to both these causes, tall muscular people of commanding appearance, unquestioned integrity, unfailing good humour, dauntless courage and reasonable intelligence had to be and have been appointed. Character certificates are insisted on, a very good pay is given, and a first class police force has been created, the pride of England, the envy of other countries and a model for other police forces. Corruption is very rare among these policemen. Some Englishmen, however, told me that the quality of the force had deteriorated after the great war. Before 1914, it seems that the London police were taking neither tips nor bribes but that after the War many had begun to take tips though not bribes. The distinction is roughly this. A tip is a gift for extra service done which the doer was not bound to do, for example, a constable bringing a taxi for a person: whereas a bribe is a payment for making the constable do or abstain from any act contrary to his duty. I have personally seen some London constables accept tips for rendering such extra services as bringing taxis. This, no doubt, is a falling-off from the high pre-war standards. A strike spirit also is said by some to have caught the constables and adversely affected their character and efficiency. I do not agree. Simply because the London police, seeing their wages standing still while those of others rose, struck work, they are not to be condemned. The

dignified nature of their strike during which they never allowed the regulation of traffic and detection of crimes to be neglected was itself a proof of their worth and sense of duty A powerful auxiliary of the police in London is the Scotland Yard whose contingent of expert detectives solves a larger number of intricate criminal puzzles than any other body of men in the world. Owing to the excellence of the London police and the staff of the Scotland Yard, murders and crimes are far rarer in London than in cities like New York and Chicago.

This city is also a great intellectual centre despite all its commercialism. A casual visit to the London University. the South Kensington Museum, the British Museum, the School of Oriental Studies, the School of Tropical Medicines and the School of Economics will easily convince anybody about this.

Perhaps the greatest charm of London is the infinite variety of entertainments it provides. The number of first class theatres, cinemas, hotels, music halls, and shows is very great. There is a wide range of choice. Some of the best theatres are simply models of their kind with such up-to-date equipments as would make an Indian open his mouth wide with astonishment. Acting has reached a high level, and famous actors and actresses attract huge crowds. India, which was the first country to have women playing the women's parts, had a long period of retrogression and has not even now

regained her lost ground whereas England which had no actresses till two hundred and fifty years back has some celebrated actresses who give endless pleasure to thousands by their masterly acting. Such is the admiration of the English public for actors and actresses that cinema stars like Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford are almost worshipped. One healthy thing in London is that many of the plays at theatres are by living authors like Bernard Shaw, Drinkwater, Galsworthy, Barrie and others, thus encouraging living talent while at the same time old classical plays too are not altogether neglected. In India, on the other hand, almost all the plays are old, old ones. Sometimes some plays run for several months and attract enormous crowds for reasons which are not altogether clear. One such play was the Chu-Chin-Chow which ran for several months and had many exciting " last nights ". Most of the music halls of London will not bear comparison with similar institutions in Dresdon or even in Berlin or Leipzig. Englishmen believe in enjoying the good things of the world, and the places of entertainment are never deserted Fortunately, national and racial prejudices are not allowed to warp the aesthetic taste, and so Madame Pavlova'a dances and Kressler's violin performances gathered record crowds though the performers were a Russian and an Austrian. This fact struck me with especial

force in the case of Kressler, for he was an Austrian who had fought against the Allies in the late war and had sustained on his face wounds whose scars still remained fresh, and a section of the press had tried its best to make people boycott his performances by playing on their false patriotism. By the refusal of Englishmen to listen to this ridiculous advice I knew that the aesthetic heart of England was sound. "We go to hear his music, not his politics" was the crushing retort the officious journals received.

Not the least noteworthy thing about London is its host of newspapers, authors, booksellers and publishers. One of the most important centres for the creation of world opinion is London. Much of this opinion is generated or broadcasted by the powerful newspapers like The Times, the Daily Telegraph, the Morning Post, the Daily Mail, the Daily Chronicle and the Daily Herald. In a democratic country, newspapers are a necessity; they are also a terrible scourge unless carefully watched and controlled by the public for whose needs they cater. If the newspapers get into the control of selfish trusts, cartels or capitalists and the public sleep over important questions, the so-called representatives of opinion will mislead the people and drag the country into all kinds of useless and costly wars, shameful peaces and pernicious legislation. Fortunately for England, her parties,

clubs and associations keep the newspapers under proper control.

One of my pleasantest memories about London is regarding the numerous lectures on various subjects by such eminent people like H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, and Bertrand Russell. The number of authors to be found in London is great as is only to be expected in the capital of a country having one of the finest literatures and one of the most book-loving peoples of the world. Books are bought in England on a scale which can never be dreamt of in India where only very few buy books though many may read each copy. Booksellers are numerous in London and fully meet the demands of the authors and readers. Journalists and pamphleteers are, of course, innumerable, and find round about Fleet Street congenial lodgings and occupations.

Though I spent nearly fifty-six days in sight-seeing in London, I could not exhaust all that was worth seeing there. The first thing that I saw was Madame Tassaud's wonderful collection of wax images looking so vivid and life-like. Miss Beck took a party of us Indians there. As soon as we entered the establishment, she, in order to play a practical joke on me, asked me to go and buy admission tickets from a girl at the counter. I went there unsuspectingly and made the request. The girl having failed to respond and having

continued to merely stare at me as before, I repeated the request. Miss Beck laughed and said "Well, Mr. Ayyar, give it up. She is only a doll and can't reply." All laughed loudly at this and chaffed me about my folly. Then we went up and saw the various images of historical and fictitious persons, being struck by the apparent life in these lifeless things Mr. S., who had laughed loudest at my discomfiture at the gate, pointed out the figure of a policeman leaning against the wall and said "I say, how life-like it looks", when suddenly, to the unutterable merriment of all and the infinite confusion of Mr S., the constable smiled and began to walk. My mistake as well as Mr. S's proved by converse processes the excellence of the figures at Madame Tassaud's. This enterprising lady was a French woman who took refuge in England during the days of the French Revolution. Hence the wide range of the collections, the predominance of historical personages and the daintiness and grace of the figures. The best compliment to Madame Tassaud is that her countrymen have thought fit to imitate her, and that the imitation, the musee Grevin in Paris has fallen short of the original It is a pity that we in India have no such institution. A greater aid to education and a more genuine and innocent source of pleasure can hardly be imagined.

The houses of Parliament left on me an indelible

impression. Thoughts of England's constitutional struggles in the 17th century rushed into my mind at the sight of the House of Commons and the Thames close by. Memories of Elliott, Pym and Hampden, the escape of the five members, the beheading of the ill-fated Charles, the Civil Wars, the iron rule of Cromwell, the Restoration, the Great Fire and the new Houses of Parliament, possessed me. I gazed at the dirty Thames flowing sluggishly past and the distinctive pile of buildings on its shore like one fascinated. Here in these buildings were fought out countless wars against tyranny and despotism, here were innumerable wars and peaces agreed to, here were dynasties made and unmade, here was passed that monumental act of philanthropy, the emancipation of the slaves, and here must be fought out the right of my dear motherland to self-government of which the first saplings had been planted only a few months ago. I also thought of the growing lack of confidence in parliament on the part of a section of the labouring classes as well as among some prominent intellectuals and wondered whether this mighty institution also had reached its zenith and had only the days of its decline to look forward to, and the thought made me sad. I repeated to myself Dryden's famous line. "All human things are subject to decay."

The British Museum took me full three days for

even casually going round. What a wonderful collection of things is stored there! The Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Greek sections were specially interesting and I feasted my eyes on all these masterpieces. I was also attracted strongly by the sculptures of M. Rodin which had a profundity which is very rare in European sculpture but fairly common in Indian statues. After my visit to the British Museum I went and visited the National Gallery. Here I saw hundreds of excellent paintings though I must confess that the Louvre in Paris and the National Gallery in Dresden are far more attractive. The reason is simple. The English kings had not the taste of the Electors and Kings of Saxony. Nor had England kings who plundered the art treasures of other countries as Napoleon did for the sake of France. The South Kensington Museum also is quite worth a visit, and I spent many odd hours there, it being just opposite 21 Cromwell Road. The tower of London is a quaint old building which would well repay a visit. The places where the two princes are supposed to have been murdered at the orders of Richard III are still shown to visitors. So also, the Crown Jewels are exposed to public view. St. Paul's cathedral is a fine structure of the Restoration period and a thing which no visitor to London can fail to see and be impressed with. The whispering gallery there is famous. Some of the best

sermons of England are delivered at St. Paul's, and I had the fortune of being present at a sermon of Dean Inge whose outspokenness, evident sincerity, and hatred of cant were most refreshing. The Westminister Abbey is another famous place which no visitor to London will care to miss. I saw the Abbey thoroughly but was struck more with the omissions in the list of eminent Englishmen who sleep there their last sleep than with the actual persons who have been given that honour. Many buried there distinctly deserved the honour less than many who were denied it. With all that, the Abbey is the repository of the remains of some of the greatest of England's children and is for that reason alone sacred. The Albert Memorial is an impressive but unlovable monument, very like Prince Albert whom England respected but never loved.

I spent a very pleasant evening at the Zoo. I was highly amused at seeing a lot of English people admiring a third rate elephant. I daresay it was nothing wonderful. I might have admired a third-rate whale equally Only, since I had seen many first-rate elephants, this poor specimen in the Zoo struck me as unworthy of even half the admiration it evoked. I had been directed to the Zoo by a friendly policeman who showed me round the whole place for nearly three hours. When I was about to return, I offered him a tip of

two shillings for his trouble. He refused it, saying "No, sir, thank you. I saw the Zoo too. So, where's the trouble?"

While going about London sight-seeing, I had occasion to observe casually some things which threw a flood of light on certain aspects of English life. Beggary in the streets is prohibited in London, and the police arrest beggars. But the begging instinct is too strong in some men to be eradicated altogether. Hence I found two or three ingenious devices by which the spirit of begging was preserved while discarding the letter. Thus several men, mostly ex-service men, were grinding hand organs at people's doors producing an intolerable noise miscalled music Generally, the house-owners preferred to pay something than allow the dreadful noise to afflict their ears. Another method is by drawing some ridiculous figures or pictures on the pavement and taking whatever charitable passers-by give. I told one such man after giving him a three-penny bit "Why, this is sheer beggary." "No, sir," replied he "It is an appeal to your artistic charity and generosity, and that is no offence." A third device is by pretending to sell boxes of matches. To one who pestered me to buy a box of matches urging that I would require it for lighting cigars and cigarettes I replied that I didn't smoke and so didn't want his matches. "It won't hurt you, sir, to pay a penny

to a poor man, seeing that you save a lot by not smoking" was the resourceful reply. Needless to say, I paid a penny and went my way. Other disguised beggars sell picture cards, scissors etc. in a similar fashion.

Within a month of my going to Cromwell Road I discovered an Indian restaurant near Leicester Square where good Indian curries, pickles and sweetmeats were available. I used to go there often and have my lunch. A friend accompanied me one day. He was from Sindh and had a vivid sense of the value of money. When I left a six-penny bit for the waitress, he told me that I was extravagant and that one penny was enough and more. I asked him to do as he liked so far as he was concerned. So he placed a penny on the table. The girl took my six penny bit and thanked me but pretended as if she had not seen the penny left by my friend and was about to go away when he foolishly called her and said "Miss, here is something for you" pointing to the penny. "You may keep it, sir. I shall not miss it" was the crushing reply. On another occasion, I went to a theatre to witness a first night performance. There was a long queue waiting outside. I went and took my place at the end of the queue. Presently, another Indian came along and despite my advice went and stood in front of many who had come before him. On some people giving the information

after some time to a policeman, that worthy quietly brought him and put him at the end of the queue ten places lower down than the place he would have occupied had he followed the right course at the outset. After some 40 days' stay in London I lost about fifteen pounds' weight and was told by a doctor that I stood in danger of catching consumption unless I took to eggs. "You eat but vegetables and you get no dhal or ghee. You will not get enough butter here so long as this wretched rationing system continues under which you are entitled only to one ounce of butter per week, a quantity entirely insufficient to supply the necessary fat to your body in a cold country like this. You need not take meat or fish, but eggs are indispensable if you are to preserve your health," said the doctor. So, I had a mental and spiritual struggle. I was at first inclined to stick to my guns and refuse to eat eggs, come what may. Finally, thoughts of my dear girl-wife and her miserable plight should I die and of my heavy undischarged debt to the Tatas made me reluctantly resolve to take to eggs. Even after the resolve was made, it was difficult to put it into execution. The inborn abhorrence to eggs had to be overcome. I went to Eustace Miles' vegetarian restaurant in Charing Cross and ordered for a scrambled egg in addition to vegetable dishes. I could not bring myself to eat it. The waitress was puzzled at my leaving it

uneaten. To her query I told her my difficulty by way of reply. She then said "Why not drown it in salt or pepper and eat it? Then you won't feel the taste." I followed her advice and drowned the egg in pepper and swallowed it at a gulp. Gradually I got used to scrambled eggs drowned in pepper. It was a long time before I could eat boiled eggs, but finally I found myself able to do that also. When the rationing was abolished, my egg-eating diminished till it was reduced almost to nothing.

Almost all London shops are closed on Sundays. One Sunday, I wanted to buy some paper urgently and was directed to a Jewess's shop by a friend. I found it open and bought the paper. Then I asked her why her shop was open on a Sunday. "Because I am not one of them Christians. What do you and I care for Sundays?" she asked. "I care because it is the day of the sun" said I. "Ah, yes, that way, but that is not the Christian way" said she Another day, the same friend mischievously persuaded me to go and ask the Jewess for a swastika. I didn't know the underlying intention of my friend and so innocently did as he asked, The Jewess was furious. "Them Christians must have set you on. You heathens don't dislike us Jews" said she. "Why do you dislike a swastika?" I asked. 'Because it means pogroms. Ah, you don't know how the Jews are treated in

Russia and Poland" said she, and her face depicted the concentrated horror of centuries of persecution. I repented of my thoughtless action and returned after expressing to her my utter abhorrence of all persecution.

London abounds in knaves of various kinds just as it abounds in good men. New-comers are trapped in a thousand ways by even apparently respectable people and fleeced of their money by cunning devices. A friend of mine, a gentleman from the United Provinces and a government officer on leave, was the victim of a typical fraud like this. He was nearly forty-five years old and wanted a hair-cut and shave badly. He got into the shop of a hair-dresser with high-sounding pretensions and had these done Then he was persuaded by the clever hair-dresser to consent to a shampoo, which by the way, is only a mimicry of our beautiful oil-baths. The hair-dresser while looking at the customer's hair, which was wholly grey, put on a grave face and said "Sir, a dreadful disease has begun to invade the roots of your hair. No wonder it has made you look ten years older than you are" The U. P. gentleman looked anxious and troubled "What is to be done?" asked he. "We have got just the medicine, for it, sir. Our expert chemists invented this. It took 25 years to invent that. Will you permit us to put it on your head after getting your hair singed, sir? It will be a pity if your beautiful head of hair

were to fall down and leave your pate bald like an egg-shell" was the reply. The deluded son of India agreed. So his hair was duly singed, that is to say burnt at the tips, and then one barber held his head and another sprayed the boasted medicine, the discovery of 25 years. The Indian had a pleasing sensation while all these things were in progress and genuinely regretted that they were all over so soon. His pleasing look however gave way to grim despair and fierce hate when the smiling hair-dresser handed over a bill for £3-10-0, being £0-7-0 for shaving shampooing and singeing and £3-3-0 for the precious medicine and spraying. He protested and met with only ridicule and indignant demand for payment. "If you could not afford the treatment, sir, you should have said so" was the principal hair-dresser's biting retort. The poor Indian cursed himself, forked out the money, and walked out of the shop with hair turned doubly grey by the ordeal. "I won't hereafter be carried away by high-sounding names and will enquire about the fees before I consent to any damned treatment by such fellows" said he to me warmly. He had seen London at its worst.

CHAPTER VIII

OXFORD.

MY second journey to Oxford was uneventful. Starting from Paddington, I reached Oxford in seventy minutes by a non-stop train and proceeded straight to my pre-arranged lodgings in 15 Chalfont Road in a taxi. Within an hour after arrival I had settled myself comfortably and was taking lunch. A strange sensation possessed me. I was feeling like a ship at anchor. In London I had always felt like a bit of flotsam. My landlady was quite a genial old woman and kept on talking about various things in Oxford all the while I was taking lunch. Her principal topic was the Colleges. I was so interested by her discourse on these that I set out immediately after lunch to have a look at them.

The Colleges of Oxford number twenty-six, four of them being meant solely for ladies. Those for men are:—All Souls, Balliol, Brasenose, Christ Church, Corpus Christi, Exeter, Hertford, Jesus, Lincoln, Magdalen, Merton, New College, Oriel, Pembroke, Queen's, St. John's, Trinity, University

Wadham, Worcester, Keble and St. Edmund's Hall. The Colleges for women are :—Lady Margaret Hall, Somerville, St. Hugh's and St. Hilda's. In addition to these Colleges there is the Society of Non-Collegiate Students for men and the Society of Oxford Home-students for women. There is also the Manchester College for theological students of a broad-minded variety. All these colleges and institutions are situated within an area of one square mile and can be seen superficially in the course of a single day though for a proper visit each major institution will require a day by itself.

The older colleges with their stately and antique buildings and richness of historical associations impressed me considerably. I was reminded of the ancient temples in South India but had regretfully to acknowledge in my mind that while these temples had a long history of mismanagement to their credit and had passed their halcyon days long ago their Oxford counter-parts had no such shameful record and were every day advancing in popularity and esteem. Age has not sapped their vitality or diminished their utility. Their buildings too are kept in proper repair unlike our famous temples. The colleges which impressed me most were Christ Church and Magdalen. The tower and chapel of Christ Church require particular mention. Magdalen has a better general appearance than even Christ Church. Some of the old colleges

like Merton, Worcester and University are also well worth a visit. Balliol is perhaps next to Christ Church and Magdalen the best-known college in Oxford, but its architectural merit is but little compared with those.

Besides the college buildings, the chief University buildings of interest are the Sheldonian Theatre where all the convocations are held, the Bodleian Library, the Indian Institute and the Clarendon Press. An Oxford convocation preserves many of the ancient formalities handed down through the centuries and to the outsider is as amusing as it is impressive. The Bodleian Library is too celebrated to require any comments. Suffice to say, that it is open from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. to all persons possessing tickets, which are very easy to get and cost nothing, and that almost all the research students of the University, and many ordinary students too, regularly go there to read. The most absolute silence prevails in the Radcliffe Camera, the reading room attached to the Bodleian, and electric light, blotting paper etc are supplied free. The library derives its name from Sir Thomas Bodley who refounded it in 1597. Radcliffe Camera came into existence in 1647. The Bodleian Library has reached its present state as a result of magnificent gifts by private individuals as well as by the steady supply of books got under the Copyrights Act which stipulates that a free copy

of every book published in the British Isles should be given to it. Among the gifts I was pleased to see a fine collection of Sanskrit manuscripts presented by the King and the Prime Minister of Nepal. It did me good to see those manuscripts transferred from obscure inaccessible Khatmandu to this famous library where scholars, including Indian scholars, would have free access to them and could acquaint the world with their contents before they were eaten up by worms. We Indians are somewhat hyper-critical. Some of my friends criticised the action of the King of Nepal as most unpatriotic. I pointed out to them that no manuscript had been given to Oxford of which a more ancient and better copy did not exist at the Khatmandu library and that those manuscripts presented to the Bodleian were ensured as long a life as science, money and care can assure. Together we looked at the wonderful manuscripts, and as we finished, had some affection for those nameless Kings who had lovingly collected them and handed them down to posterity. The Royal Libraries at Khatmandu, Tanjore, Trivandrum, Mysore, Udaipur, Srinagar and other places are among the glories of India and certainly have contributed not a little to the feelings of affection which the average Indian entertains for Royalty. Our Kings were among the most cultured and accomplished in the world. It will be difficult to find a parallel in other

countries to Emperor Harsha who wrote the Ratnavali, Nagananda and Priyadarsika or to King Bhoja who wrote that amazing book, the Yukti-kalpataru, to quote only two instances. The latter-day Kings no doubt fell away greatly from the high standards of Harsha and Bhoja, but something remained of the old royal patronage of learning as evidenced by the example of the rulers of Nepal, Tanjore, Travancore and Mysore.

The Bodleian has now become overcrowded with books and has invaded the surrounding buildings. Still, there is no room for the steady stream of new books, and the problem of solving this difficulty is engaging the anxious attention of the university authorities, Some are for splitting up the library into sections and housing them in different buildings; others are for destroying the unimportant books and releasing the large space occupied by them; but most are for getting a new building, large enough for present and prospective needs, constructed. The public spirit of Englishmen and their affection for Oxford are such that there will be no great difficulty in getting funds for pursuing the third course. In India funds are readily enough given for starting a new institution, but soon the enthusiasm fizzles out and the problem of maintenance is so difficult that many foundations go to ruin while others are started. The innumerable ruined temples, schools, tanks, wells and rest-

houses in our countryside and the appreciable number of new structures of the same kind prove my point. If people had had cared less for their personal glory and more for the good of the country they would have spent their money more in renovations and restorations than in new constructions and the country would have benefitted more by their charity. In this respect we may well take "a lesson from England

The Indian Institute is a solid building at the end of Broad Street and is the place where lectures on Indian History and Indian Vernaculars are delivered. It has a good library, but a declaration has to be signed for taking out books. Hence few Indians ever take advantage of the facilities offered by the Institute. The Adviser to Indian students has his office there. Most Indians in Oxford fight shy of the Indian Institute and never enter its portals except when absolutely necessary. They never used to feel the same freedom and dignity there as at the Bodleian or any other rendezvous at Oxford. Perhaps this was inevitable under the circumstances, but was all the same deplorable.

The Clarendon Press is the official press of the University and was founded by Lord Clarendon partly out of the profits got by sales of copies of "The History of The Great Rebellion." The readers of the press are generally Masters of Arts. Hence the innumerable printers' devils found in

books printed in the mofussil Indian presses are unknown.

The colleges in Oxford are hostels with a staff of professors and lecturers attached. All the lectures in every college are open to all who are members of the University and care to attend. Each undergraduate is given a list of the lectures every term and may choose which he will attend and which not. He is expected to intimate to his tutor the lectures which he intends to attend so that the tutor may see whether the discretion has been rightly exercised. Apart from this there is no obligation on the part of any undergraduate to attend any lecture. There is no conscripted audience kept ready for lecturers and professors as in India. Hence the lecturers in Oxford have to prepare well and deliver really good lecturers if they are to attract many students. Brilliant lecturers gather large numbers while the bores generally have to lecture to empty halls. If the conscription system were abolished in our colleges, the quality of our lectures is sure to improve.

Generally, each student is given one tutor to whom he goes once a week. The usual thing is for the student to write an essay on a subject set by the tutor and to read it over with him. A very frank discussion follows. Then the subject for the next week is given. The tutorial system is analogous to the upanishadic system of Ancient

India when teacher and pupil sat together and discussed. Ordinarily the tutor is from the same institution as the student, but there is nothing to prevent a student from getting a tutor from a different institution through the head of his own. An undergraduate can also have a number of tutors at the same time if he is prepared to pay for them. A fixed fee is paid per term to the University for the privilege of attending lectures and to each tutor for the tuition he gives.

As Oxford is a residential University, all the undergraduates have to keep residence within the limits of the university. There are three terms every year, Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity. The academical year commences from about the middle of October, and ends about the middle of June when most of the examinations take place. Each term consists of eight weeks out of which residence has to be kept for at least six weeks continuously if the term is to count towards one's standing. Residence is to be either in the colleges or in any lodgings approved by the University. All students attached to the Non-Collegiate Delegacy and the Society of Oxford Home Students of necessity live in these licensed lodgings. Some of the older students attached to the colleges also do so as there is no space for all the students of a college in the college itself owing to the phenomenal rise in the number of students after the war.

For residence in colleges pretty heavy bills have to be paid every term. These bills vary from college to college and from undergraduate to undergraduate. The costliest colleges are Magdalen and Christ Church, but even in these there live some frugal undergraduates whose expenses are only half of the average. In good private residences with airy rooms, bath etc, the usual charges will be about three to three and a half guineas per week for two rooms, three meals and tea. Of course, entertainments are extra, and a good bit will be spent on them, On the whole an undergraduate who wants to pull on comfortably at Oxford during term time and at some seaside resort during the vacations will require at least four hundred pounds per year for all his expenses. Continental tours, wine, cigars and cigarettes will be extra. Of these, continental tours are indispensable for an Indian student if he wants to broaden his mind. But wine and smoke are quite unnecessary despite all the sophistical arguments adduced in their favour The Indian who avoids them in the West will not only have a robust health but will also have a sounder finance than his brother who has contracted these habits so deleterious to health. A cold climate requires no more alcohol and smoke than a hot one. The only advantage of a cold climate is that the evil effects of these pernicious habits will be less

marked than in a hot climate. Nor are these habits a necessity for sociability except of the vulgar kind. No doubt, at present a person who abstains from wine and smoke will be regarded as something of a crank in English social circles of the ordinary variety, but so will a man who abstains from chewing betel be regarded in Indian circles of the same cultural level. All this proves really nothing except that the majority of a nation loves even its vices and wants others to follow them. Among Indians in England I noticed one thing peculiar. Many of them who took to wine after landing in England became so addicted to it that they knew no moderation and would drink to excess till they fell down and rolled in a disgraceful state vomitting foul liquid and fouler language. The sight of some otherwise good fellows in this shameful condition impressed on my mind the necessity for prohibition in India if only we could make real prohibition without illicit manufacture a success in a country where a knife and a mud pot are all that are required by way of implements, and the cocoanut, palmyra and sago palms and cashew and mahua plants exist in millions. The problem of how to make up the lost revenue, though great, is nothing compared with that of preventing illicit manufacture. One day, certainly, we shall solve these problems, but before that is done the best brains in the country will have to furiously think

in company with the Abkari officers who know the practical side of the question. In England, though not less than 95 per cent are persons who use alcohol, the general public are not so much molested by drinkers as in India. This is because a large percentage of the drinkers never lose control over themselves, and besides, there are the ever-vigilant police who prevent drunkards from assaulting or abusing wayfarers. The magistrates also are pretty severe with those charged with drunken and disorderly behaviour. Wine and cigars are very costly in England and are the prime causes of the chronic impecuniosity of the young middle-class Indians who fall victims to them.

Though Oxford is known to the outside world only as the seat of a University it is also a considerable town with brisk trade. The very name shows that there was an important ford across the Thames at this place. At present more than half the trade is with professors and undergraduates. In Oxford itself the University men are known as the "Gown" and the townsmen as the "Town" In many notices both the "Town and Gown" are invited to attend. The early kings of England have given special privileges to the Gown which thus dominates the Town. All cases between Town and Gown within University limits, that is roughly within a radius of three miles from the clock in the Corn Market, are heard by the

Vice-Chancellor's Court Annually there is also a mimic fight between the Town and the Gown where the Town invariably goes to the wall.

Oxford cares very well for the physical, mental and moral welfare of the students. Boating, football, cricket, hockey, tennis etc cater to the physical needs Of these, by far the most hankered after is boating. Every institution for male undergraduates has got a barge on the Isis and has one or two sets of competitors. The training is hard and the trainers exacting. At the end of every term there are races between the various college teams watched by hundreds of spectators. At the end of every academic year, in June, there are the Eights or annual competition which settles the rank of every boat. Thousands assemble to witness these races, and the excitement is tense. There are races between the Oxford and Cambridge teams every year in London. All the boat races in Oxford are in the Thames which is locally known as the Isis. For pleasure, the undergraduates, including ladies, punt in the Cherwell, a tiny but deep tributary of the Thames. Even the Cherwell is not without its dangers. It is a deep stream with troublesome weeds at the bottom. Once when I was punting with two other Indians, the boat got caught in some thorns on the side and both my friends went suddenly to extricate it. The balance was, of course, upset and I went like a

bullet into the river in all my clothes. Ludicrously enough, my first inclination was not to swim to the other shore in that bitter cold but to go to the bottom and fetch sand, as was my habit in the tanks and rivers of Malabar. I found weeds instead and came up to the top just before my breath was out. I went to my lodgings quick, undressed, took a glass of hot lemonade and went to bed. The next morning I was all right. All accidents in the Cherwell do not end so happily. Once, a newly-wedded clergyman went with his bride punting in this river. The punting pole stuck fast in the mud. In attempting to extricate it the unfortunate man lost his balance and fell into the river, was caught in the weeds and was drowned within sight of his agonized and helpless wife who was sitting in the boat. Six hours later, the body was recovered along with a hundredweight of weeds On another occasion, a youngster who had just bought a new bicycle rushed madly on it, was unable to negotiate a sharp curve near the river, and fell into it with his bicycle. A gentleman rushed into the river and saved the boy but got the cramp and died himself. Though boating is the favourite sport of the undergraduates. cricket, football, both Association and Rugby, and tennis are also popular. Annual cricket and tennis matches are played between the Oxford and Cambridge teams The peculiar thing in Oxford is that the

tutors and lecturers urge the students to take to sports and in many cases act as coaches. Herein there is a remarkable difference between our tutors and lecturers and their Oxford brethren. Ours take no interest in sports at all and one must thank God if they do not actively discourage boys from taking part in them. Things are however changing slowly for the better. Among Oxford undergraduates those who take no part in sports are regarded with contempt even though they pass high. Ordinarily, the sports do not in the least stand in the way of one's studies though it is possible that the Blues, the top sportsmen, suffer from an examination point of view by the excessive time spent on sports. The games teach the Oxford undergraduates resource, self-confidence, fair play and team-pulling besides improving their physique.

Mentally, there is the very greatest intellectual freedom allowed. In olden times there was much suppression of opinion, mainly by clerics, but now there is absolute freedom. Even tutors encourage free discussion and are disappointed with tame acquiescence. Students are allowed also to speak what they like at their meetings and associations. The Oxford Union is the greatest of these associations. In its spacious rooms free and full discussion on every possible kind of subject is carried on, and many of England's best-known politicians and orators had their baptism of fire there. Membership

is open to all members of the University subject to a pretty heavy fee. The Indians have their own Oxford Majlis which counts on its roll all the Indians in Oxford with a few insignificant exceptions. The name Majlis is of Persian origin and was adopted for a curious reason. When the association was started, the Hindu promoters chose as its emblem a lotus and as its motto the well-known words "Vande Mataram" (Hail Motherland!) in Devanagari characters. Their Muslim colleagues were somewhat embarassed and wanted to know where they came in. The resourceful Hindus at once agreed that the Association should be called the Majlis. Thus the Muslims were placated. This was long before the Lucknow pact, in days when Hindu-Muslim differences had not been advertised too much to admit of informal compromises agreeable to both. In the Majlis there is absolute freedom of discussion, and, as is perhaps but natural, extreme opinions find constant expression amidst applause. In Cambridge also there is a Majlis. In London and Edinburgh there are Indian Associations. Besides the Oxford Union and the Majlis there are many other associations in Oxford, like the Anthropological Association, the Lotus Club, the associations in every college etc.

Morally, Oxford cares for her students in three ways, firstly by the teaching of philosophy and

theology, secondly by healthy association between the lecturers and the students, and thirdly by the institution of proctors and bull-dogs who hound out the morally delinquent and get them punished suitably. Post-war days were very trying to proctors and bull-dogs as many grown-up men, who had fought in the war, were undergraduates under the shortened course system and did not easily conform to the rules of the university about hours, associates etc and were not always amenable to reason.

During term-time undergraduates usually remain in Oxford and during vacations, of which there are three, they generally go either to their homes or to the south coast health resorts or to the continent. In my first vacation I went to Bournemouth and in some other vacations I went to Torquay, South Sea and Brighton. All these places are organised for pleasure and seethe with pleasure-seekers. Char-a-bancs ply about in all directions and every week-end increases the gay pleasure-seeking crowd. As a relief from the dull drab life of London or Oxford it is excellent. But a long stay at one of these coastal pleasure resorts will not be good from any point of view. Many people in England go to these places for a change, and benefit immensely. There are beautiful gardens, marine walks, hill scenery etc in almost every one of these pleasure resorts; and boarding houses, hotels and lodgings of all varieties are enormous in number. From

Bournemouth I went to Christ Church and the New Forest. The former has an interesting old church dating from Edward the Confessor's time. The New Forest has some magnificent oaks, but it is no forest at all in the sense that we understand that word in India. It is a splendid wood more like a plantation in Nilambur than a forest on the Ghauts. I visited the place where William Rufus was killed. All through my walk in the New Forest I remembered Marryatt's Children of the New Forest. From Torquay I visited Dartmoor, that wide rolling desolate tract with an abundance of heather. Dartmoor made a deep impression on me. The penal settlement in it is in entire keeping with its atmosphere of gloom and cheerlessness. From Southsea, I sailed and had a close view of some war-ships anchoring at Portsmouth. There was a fair on at Southsea when I went, and some man was playing the part of Neptune. Fairs are numerous all over England and are survivals of the Middle Ages. More merriment goes on than trade at these fairs now. There is a fair called St. Giles' Fair at Oxford. It lasts for two nights and attracts great crowds from all round. The peculiar feature of this fair is that girls try to daub young men with powder at night and are kissed in return. A return to Oxford from the vacation after a tour always finds the undergraduate fresh and ready to have another go at his studies. Though Oxford is called

the home of forlorn causes and is dubbed hopelessly conservative, this is rather a reputation derived from its past history than a description of the present. Reactionary Oxford has given women the same privileges as regards examinations and degrees whereas revolutionary Cambridge has been fighting against it strenuously and some of its male undergraduates even created a riot when there was a proposal to extend these privileges to that University.

Ragging is still common enough among the undergraduates, and the victims are often the freshers. It is generally a harmless practical joke though occasionally, as when a foulmouthed slanderer was dipped in a pond at midnight and tarred and feathered, it exceeds the limits of frivolity.

There is an old-world courtesy in Oxford towards foreigners and especially Indians. One day myself and five Englishmen were attending a lecture on original documents on English History without the text books which we were expected to take with us. The lecturer saw us all at a glance though we were plunged in our neighbours' books: calling all the five Englishmen by name, he asked them to go out of the class as they had not brought the text books but he did not ask me to do the same though he knew that I too had no text book. If he had said "All who have not brought the text books may go

out" I too would have gone out. Purposely he called out the names. This lecturer did not know me at all then and had treated me preferentially only because of my nationality. Needless to say, I learnt the lesson and never again was found without a text book Again, when Bertrand Russell lectured under the auspices of the Majlis, the English undergraduates, a considerable section of whom hated him and his principles violently and wanted to prevent him from even coming to Oxford, did absolutely nothing to disturb the meeting, but when the same distinguished savant lectured under the auspices of the English undergraduates of the Labour party, the opponents entered in large numbers and created a huge disturbance ending in a free fight. Can we Indians honestly say that we pay as much consideration for foreigners whom we do not fear? To quote two more instances of this quality. Once on returning from the Majlis it was 11-30 P. M. and I had to bike $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles. On the way a puncture occurred and I was at a fix. Being a beginner in cycling I could not manage to roll the cycle as the front wheel was flat. It was out of the question to carry it for $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles to my lodgings. An Englishman who was passing by saw my difficulty and most obligingly rolled it for 3 furlongs to St. John's College where I kept it at a friend's. Before I could return he had gone in order to save me from once more thanking him.

Again, one day, when myself and an Indian friend were cycling in a country village near Oxford my friend fell off his bicycle and got some bruises. A lady near by took him to her house, put him to bed, dressed his wounds, gave him tea and offered me too some. She was unknown to us and was by no means rich.

All this is not saying however that there is absolutely no colour prejudice in Oxford. There is very little of it and that is generally rampant among a certain type of retired Anglo-Indians and their associates as also among people who had come under the influence of Mr. Horatio Bottomley. One day, a friend wanted lodgings. We saw a board advertising for lodgers in a boarding house in the centre of Oxford. On ringing the bell, the landlady looked out of the upstairs window, saw that we were coloured men, and sent her maid to say that the vacant room had been booked. She also came down herself and took away the board saying "I am sorry, sirs, you are a day too late," and smiling a bewitching smile of innocence. We had our suspicions, however, and went round to the same place the next day. As we had expected. the board had again been put up. We rang the bell. The poor lady who was downstairs and had never expected us, opened the door and was horrified to see us. "You see; sirs, the other lodgers object to coloured gentlemen. It is not my fault" she

said to us, and we left in high spirits at the success of our ruse. In the colleges also, Indians are not associated with freely by all the English undergraduates. Would-be Government servants and missionaries and budding labourites are most free. As a wit used to say, "Soul-revolutionaries, no-revolutionaries, and world-revolutionaries take to Indians most," The others too make friends with Indians who are keen sportsmen. Sometimes, offence is taken where none is meant. Once, my landlady's girl. a child of ten, asked me what my country was. I said "India." "No; don't be silly" said she. "India is ours. Which is your country?" I felt like one stabbed, but kept quiet, realizing her ignorance. She triumphantly showed me a book where the lesson on India began with the words "India is ours"

Indeed, an appalling ignorance of India is found in Oxford as in the rest of England and Europe. An elderly lady whose son-in-law, one Mr. Brown, was in India in the army asked me. "Of course you know Brown? He is in India, in Peshawar or Bombay." Little did this lady realize the size or population of India or the vast gulf which divides the European and the Indian out in the East. On another occasion, a lady brought her album to me and said "Please write me down something in *Indian*."

She had evidently not heard of the 37 major

languages of India. To oblige her, I wrote down a Sanskrit sloka which means "Ignorance of others' weaknesses is sometimes better than knowledge of them for it creates no pride and no prejudice."

This ignorance is not only of India but of all coloured countries. A Negro friend of mine called Mr. J. had great difficulty in finding a lodging in Oxford. The shallow education of the landladies and the cheap books they had read had made them believe that all Negroes, especially those hailing from Africa, were cannibals, and the carefully filed and pointed front teeth of my friend confirmed this idea. The fear of waking up one fine morning and finding themselves in his belly made them averse to entertaining him as a lodger. My friend was put out, and told me "These English treat you heathens and pagans better than they do us fellow Protestants" I laughed. Mr. J. always used to call Non-Christian Non-Muslims "heathens and pagans" like all converts to Christianity, but without meaning any offence. Finally, he got a landlady to take him after charging an extra two shillings per week for discounting his black colour and as insurance against swallowing. As I myself thought that cannibals might still exist in the interior parts of Nigeria from where Mr. J came, I asked him "Are there any cannibals in Nigeria now"? "No" he replied. "I wish there were, to swallow all these white men up!"

There is an idea among some English people that all the Indians who go to England are Christians, half being sent out by the Government and the other half by the missionaries! One day, an old Protestant lady asked me to what sect I belonged. "I am a Hindu" said I. "Glad you are not one of them Catholics" was the astounding reply. "Why?" I asked. "Because" said she, "a Hindu can be converted to Protestantism but not a Catholic." Once every year, girl volunteers collect money for the foreign missions for converting the heathen. They give a rose and take whatever is put into the sealed box through the slit. Myself and an Indian Christian friend were walking along High Street when a volunteer approached us and said "Money for the Heathen, please" jingling a sealed box three-fourths full of coins. My friend gave a shilling and had a rose pinned by the fair volunteer. When she approached me and requested "Money for the Heathen, please," I said "I am a Heathen. Give me all the money" to the inexpressible merriment of all. I used frequently to attend services in churches in England. One day, a person who knew that I was a Hindu, approached me when I was sitting in a church and said "I am glad you attend church." "I like to attend churches now and then" said I. "That is the first step" he added, smiling benevolently. "It is also the ast" I replied, "for I go to different churches

every time and always out of mere curiosity." On another occasion when I was attending a church a missionary who had been out to India delivered an outrageous lecture on the Hindus as an appeal for funds to convert them. "There are none so depraved as the Hindus. The depth of their villainy and depravity can never be imagined by one who has not seen them. And yet when they are reclaimed to Christ none are better, gentler and saintlier. Many Hindus murder their girl babies, and many marry away their girls when they are one year old. The abominations of this race of heathens are unmentionable" said he. After the discourse, I introduced myself to the truthful messenger of Christ as a Hindu to his manifest confusion. "I must apologize for wounding your feelings" said he. "but I was not aware of your presence." "Men of religion should speak only the truth" said I, and you know that you spoke many lies and half-truths" Then I went away leaving him gaping. The Oxford University allows Non-Christian Asiatics to offer Plato's Phaedo and the Apology in lieu of scripture, and nobler books cannot be prescribed.

Sometimes the latent suspicion of the foreigner flares up suddenly even in Oxford. An irresponsible undergraduate sent some chocolates and powdered glass to the Vice-Chancellor in a spirit of devilry when a sensational case of arsenic poisoning in chocolate was being tried. At once there was a

rumour that some subtle oriental poison had been sent by some Egyptian or Indian. Fortunately the English undergraduate who had sent it generously owned up, and the affair ended in general laughter and merriment.

Of late, England has revised her laws regardiug domicile, and now no coloured man can get English citizenship and the right to vote at parliamentary elections by birth or long residence as before. Still, all Oxford graduates have got a right to vote for the election of the member for the university irrespective of colour or creed or nationality, and whenever an election is on I get the ballot paper by post though by the time I get it the election will almost always be over. A significant commentary this on the liberal traditions of this ancient university and its scrupulous regard for the rights even of its humblest alumni.

The spirit of independence is fostered in Oxford even by the tutors and professors unlike in India where everybody seems to be anxious to smother any budding signs of independence or self-respect in a student. When I took a declaration form for taking out books from the Indian Institute Library to my tutor, he said indignantly "Mr. Ayyar, it is beneath your dignity to sign this declaration with a surety. I shall never sign it, and I hope you never will." I at once realized my error and returned the declaration form to the Institute. Another

instance will also prove this. Myself and a friend were both under the same tutor and used to go to him at the same hour. I used to freely discuss with the tutor and advance opinions quite contrary to his known opinions whereas my friend used to acquiesce in whatever he said, adding to me in private "Why reveal our real differences to him and irritate him?" At the end of the year when we parted company with the tutor he told me "Mr. Ayyar, I am glad to see that you are able to form your own opinions and defend them." Then, turning to my friend, he said "I am disappointed in you. You seem to be content with acquiescing in whatever I say. You must cultivate the habit of thinking independently." "I am independent" urged my friend. "I agreed with you only because I held the same opinions" "I hope not," was the reply. "If week by week, on vastly different subjects you agreed with me in all my opinions, the prospect is alarming." My friend kept silent, On coming out he told me "I was wrong and you were right, Hereafter I shall not be guided by the example of Indian tutors."

While at Oxford, I learnt cycling, The first attempts were as usual alarmingly disappointing. I felt ashamed of falls, and my landlord Mr. Rignall must have groaned under my eleven stone weight in trying to keep me on the seat. Somehow I used to steer for the pavement or a fence or a gutter,

I used to choose night time for my operations so that my falls might not be noticed by passers-by. "You can't learn to walk or bike without falls said Mr, Rignall to me, and I lost a bit of my supersensitiveness thereafter, and, of course, picked, up cycling correspondingly quicker. Even so, I had to take five one-hour lessons from Mr, Rignall, I offered him a sovereign as a present for his trouble, but he indignantly refused to accept it and was backed up by Mrs, Rignall. I felt somewhat ashamed at having made the offer when Mr, Rignall asked me "Would you have accepted it if you had been in my place, Mr, Ayyar ?"

Never is a beginner an expert cyclist; I was no exception to this rule. Once, while going down Banbury road to my lodgings in Victoria Road I suddenly stopped my cycle opposite Barclay's Bank since I had some business there. A clergyman was, unknown to me, coming on his cycle close behind me, and, having not foreseen my stopping, bumped against my cycle and fell down, His clothes were slightly torn, He did not lose his temper, but simply said "You shouldn't stop in the middle like this without giving any warning or looking back," I apologized and he went away, Another time, I was cycling along a road pretty fast when a labourer came suddenly into the road from a side alley and cut across it, My cycle bumped against him. Both of us fell down, I said that I was sorry for

the accident. He said "Never mind, sir I am used to it," and a present of a shilling was thankfully declined.

At Oxford I had a flight in an aeroplane for the first time in my life. Huge crowds had gathered round the aeroplane which was a small one carrying only two passengers at a time. A guinea was the charge for ten minutes' flight. I paid a guinea and, putting on the aviator's cap, got into the seat which was quite comfortable. A lady got into the other seat. After making some most unmusical noises, the aeroplane rose from the ground in awkward circles. Soon it gathered speed and shot into the air to a height of about two furlongs and then flew horizontally round Oxford. We had a beautiful view of the town. The descent was quick and most pleasant. When hovering in mid air, I remembered Trisanku, the king who was condemned to remain for ever between heaven and earth, and almost envied his fate. The aeroplane owner would have charged him countless millions. The ascent and descent resembled like experiences in a lift. I was proud of the fact that the first nation to conceive the idea of aerial vehicles was India. Even if we hold that it is not proved that the ancient Indians knew how to construct aeroplanes it is proved that they did view aerial conveyances, as a possibility and to that extent deserved credit.

The Armistice Day and Guy Fawkes Day are celebrated by the undergraduates, and much drinking and endless practical jokes and frolics are indulged in. Sometimes these practical jokes are pretty serious as when once some Cambridge undergraduates caught a policeman and put chilli powder into his eyes and were fined for it, or when some other undergraduates of the same University, indignant at the prospect of women getting equal privileges as regards degrees, attacked a girls' college and damaged the portico but in cooler moments subscribed for its repair.

The dialect spoken by the Oxford country people is not standard English. It is by no means uncommon to hear landladies and others say "You was," "Us didn't know" etc. But with the spread of compulsory education Standard English is slowly spreading its tentacles and crushing out the dialects The process is not yet complete. When in Bovey-Tracey, a village in Devonshire, with an English friend from London, I tried to converse with a labourer who talked the Devonshire dialect but could make nothing of what he said. I asked my London friend what the labourer was saying, but he said with a shrug of his shoulders "His jargon is as unintelligible to me as to you." The case becomes even more glaring in Carnarvon and other Welsh part of Wales. There are very few illiterate persons in England, thanks to the

compulsory education. "The parent to the jail and the child to the school" principle applied in Germany in the case of recalcitrant parents keeping children away from the school has also worked wonders in England. In all my stay in England I saw only one illiterate person. I was in the train to Torquay. An old man of 65 got in at Bristol and sat near me. When I had finished my newspaper, I asked him, as is usual in England, "Would you like to have a look at it.? "No, sir, I doesn't know to read. Pity I was born long before them schools were started for the poor" was his pathetic reply. India which in the time of Asoka was certainly the most literate country in the world has now sunk to the lowest rung in the ladder and counts a less percentage of literates than even Negro America.

I used to attend many public lectures. One was about birth control and the prominent speakers were labourites. One speaker deplored the increase of unwanted children in the world, and, analysing the causes of the disturbing increase in births in several countries, said "In England, there are too many births because of the cry for white population to fill and guard the Empire; in France, for defence and Military reasons; in Germany, for the war of revenge, in Czecho-Slovakia, for self-preservation from the internal and external Germans; in Russia, because of the partiality to children

extended by the Bolsheviks; in India, to gain merit and salvation; in China, to get titles after one's death; and in Wadai-Wadai, to have at least one left after kidnapping which is very common. When will the world come to its senses?". "They are all a set of Bolshies" said a woman neighbour to me. "They want us respectable people to be weak at the time of the social revolution for which they are plotting and so say this in order that we may have few children to defend us." I was so taken in by the humour of the situation that I heartily agreed.

During my stay in Oxford I had the good fortune of being for the greater part of the period a lodger in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Rignall, very obliging and kind people who tried their very best to make my life at Oxford happy and gave me, so to speak, "a home from home." This perhaps accounts for my not falling a victim to home sickness like some of my friends. Of course, another reason was that I had many Indian friends from different provinces and we used to meet often at tea.

The Hindus and Muslims do not have any squabbles in England, but even so they do not meet often. I came across some interesting Muslims from the United Provinces and found them quite good fellows. One day, while talking about the costly ceremonies after death among the Indians, one of these told me with feeling "Mr. Ayyar.

death is a great evil, but a greater evil comes after death, the relatives who eat up the substance. Their principle seems to be 'The man having gone, why leave his effects behind?' This same Muslim friend was very credulous and took me to the St. Giles Fair to convince me of the truth of clairvoyance and astrology. His example, an unhappy one was that a Negro could tell the year of any coin held in one's hand without looking at it. The Negro was really a clever fellow and managed to give the dates of several coins to the great joy of my friend. Suddenly, I took a Travancore coin with the year of issue in Malayalam figures and asked the Negro to give the date. As I expected, he floundered, and I walked triumphantly out with my crest-fallen friend. But even my credulous friend was not deceived by "a giant rat" exhibited close by and viewable on a payment of three pence. We both saw it, and my friend exclaimed indignantly "This is no giant rat, it is a dwarf bandicoot. We have been swindled."

The Oxford undergraduates discuss politics freely at their meetings though few take an active part in politics. They have also a great sense of their duty towards their country. Before even conscription was enforced in the late great war half the undergraduates had gone to the front as volunteers. In every college for males there is a worthy "Roll of

Honour" of those of its alumni who fell fighting for their King and country. Ex-service men got shortened courses for their degrees. I said to one ex-service man with a distinguished record in the war. "You must have had a glorious time fighting for your country. "Not at all" replied he. "Treading on your fallen brother you have to crush out his expiring life with your feet and fight on filling up the gap. Oh, it is horrible. I don't believe I can go through it again" Conscientious objectors were excluded from competing for the Civil Service for five years after the conclusion of the war. This was in addition to the imprisonment they underwent during the war. When I pitied these in a private conversation at Torquay in a boarding house, "Pity them!" burst out an old lady "What, my sons went to the front to defend these wretches who were making money all the time, and one of them died. What pity is due to these cowardly traitors?". That was the trend of feeling then; I respected her mother's heart and kept quiet. In Oxford there is an Officers' Training Corps, but it is not open to Indians as an Indian Christian friend of mine found out on enquiry.

My life at Oxford was very pleasant. I used to go out every day to some country village or other and became thoroughly fascinated with the surrounding country side.

The meadows and parks of the town, the many

quaint old houses, and the charming country round about constitute not the least of the attractions of Oxford. Lately, a society called the Oxford Preservation Society has been started to preserve these amenities and to relieve congestion, and numerous people from the Prince of Wales downwards have subscribed sums ranging from five thousand pounds to half a crown. This shows the affection of the people for the ancient university and their appreciation of some of its unique beauties. Every year hundreds of Oxford old boys visit their colleges with their wives and children and show these to them with justifiable pride.

Oxford is eminently defensible with low hills all round commanding the plains below. I visited some historic castles famous in the civil war. One was near Banbury and is a perfect example of the castles of Stuart times. Here Charles had a narrow escape from Cromwell who held a hasty consultation in a hall packed with soldiers. A fee of two shillings per visitor is charged by the present Lord Saye. The Duke of Marlborough's castle at Woodstock is also quite interesting with a magnificent park which is open free to the public. The originals of the Magna Carta and the death warrant of Charles I. are preserved carefully in the British Museum, and I handled them with permission.

Oxford University reminded me of the old Indian Universities of Nalanda, Takshasila,

Benares, Vikramasila, etc., and especially of Nalanda They have very much in common. In teaching a vast variety of subjects by experts, in the fostering of free discussions, and bold speculation, in the encouragement of originality, in the production of great geniuses and savants, in imparting a broad culture with the necessary specialization, in laying emphasis on personal and constant contact between teacher and pupil, and in fostering independence and a thirst for learning, all were at one. They were also alike in the great defect that their education was more theoretical than practical. Oxford leaves the arts to be taught by the younger Universities like Birmingham, Manchester, etc., just as Nalanda left them to the castle guilds. Oxford however has not got the chief defects of our ancient Universities, the neglect of history, foreign languages and research work, the hiding of discoveries, contempt of the Sudra and the depressed classes and the slavish dependence on King and nobles for maintenance. It also teaches some more subjects like anthropology, geography, palaeontology, archaeology, etc. Indian scholars had to study even Chinese after going to China and though the great Buddhist missionaries easily mastered the language it would have been a help had they learnt it before going to China. In Oxford, an important place is held by research work and rightly so. It is a shame that we in India neglected research work

till recently. But Oxford has some defects which our ancient universities had not. The education is very costly and beyond the reach of the poor though scholarships to some extent have alleviated the evil in recent years. Thus the intelligent poor cannot afford an Oxford education. All our ancient universities placed the rich and the poor on an equal footing though the demon of caste worked an equal quantity of mischief in the Hindu Universities. Again, more attention is paid to the material side and less to the spiritual side, the goal aimed at being not salvation but getting along in this world and often not too scrupulous about the means. So also, much research work is undertaken merely for destructive purposes like the discovery of poison gas, guns with 300 miles range, bombing air ships, etc. Further, the principle "Europe runs the world and the white man is the lord of all" is taught, consciously or unconsciously, and racial arrogance, so dangerous to the future peace of the world, is fostered. National jealousies, too, often lead to a twisting of history by those who ought to know better.

The objects of an ideal education ought to be to make a man lead a healthy life, physically, mentally and morally, to make him suited for his occupation in life and thus fall into the scheme of things, to make him lose false values and get true values, to create in him an insatiable thirst for

truth and knowledge, to make him cultivate the faculty of correct thinking, discussion and expression, to make him choose right friends and associates and to make him a valuable member of society and a servant of humanity by placing his knowledge, experience, reason, wealth and strength at the disposal of his deserving fellow beings and helping the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, the wicked, the degraded and the depressed to get out of their miserable state and thus leave the world a shade better than he found it. Neither Oxford nor Nalanda nor Takshasila nor Benares has completely succeeded in doing all this to all its alumni, but that they have done so in the case of a good many and have tried to do so in the case of all is ample tribute to their utility and sufficient justification for the love and reverence cherished towards them by a grateful humanity.